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OUT-OF-SCHOOL PROGRAMMES FOR GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN

IN

SIERRA LEONE

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Judith May-Parker

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I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Republic of Sierra Leone is situated on the West Coast of Africa and is bordered by Liberia and Guinea. These three countries have now established economic and political ties with the formation of the Mano River Union. Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone is the seat of government where the House of Representatives and headquarters of government ministries and departments are located. It is also the Centre of commercial activities. For administrative purposes, Sierra Leone is divided into four sections i.e. the western area and the southern, northern and eastern provinces.

The country is mainly agricultural in nature with farmers planting crops mostly for subsistence. This situation is reflected in the report that in 1976/7, 69.5 per cent of the contribution of agriculture to the gross domestic product was non-monetary. Farming is also carried out for cash crops such as palm fruit, coffee, cocoa, piassava and ginger. In 1967 agriculture, forestry and fishing contributed 39.9 per cent to the gross domestic product. Mining has played a significant role in the country's economy especially in its export trade. In 1976/1977 mining contributed 10.2 per cent to the gross domestic product. The main minerals which have been mined are diamonds, bauxite and iron ore (until 1975 when the iron-ore mines at Marampa were closed down). Rutile is now being mined for export. Gold has been discovered but mining for export purposes has not yet been started. The industrial sector is limited and consists mainly of small-scale manufacturing enterprises for food, beverages and tobacco. A considerable amount of the commercial activity occurs in the urban and informal sector.

In conducting an investigation into the training and employment opportunities for Sierra Leonean women and girls, one is immediately confronted with the grim realities of the economic situation. The oil crisis, the recent decline in the mining sector in Sierra Leone especially with regard to diamonds, in addition to the demands of an increasing population, have put considerable strain on the economy. The economic crisis which Sierra Leone is undergoing must be clearly understood if the urgency of the need to provide training facilities for girls is to be fully appreciated, and if the difficulties facing girls seeking employment are to be fully grasped.

An insight into the economic problems facing the country can be obtained by referring to "The Survey of Economic and Social Conditions in Africa," 1979-1980[1/].

> "The growth of the Sierra Leone economy has been rather disappointing during the decade of the 1970s, with an increase in G.D.P. at constant factor cost of only 1.7 per cent a year between 1970/1971 and 1978/1979 fiscal years".

1/ E/CN.14/802

"The Government has had to resort to substantial domestic and external borrowing to meet both current and capital expenditures, and inflationary tendencies continued to be in evidence throughout the period with substantial price increases particularly in the last few years".

"In the industrial sector, growth has been flagging, reflecting a decline in effective consumer demand, and the restraints caused by exchange and import restrictions".

Against this background, it is not surprising to see that unemployment has become a more prominent feature. Kpedekpo 2/ commented that "Mounting unemployment in urban areas is probably the most serious and intractable problem facing Sierra Leone". The National Development Plan 1974/1975-1978/1979 had pointed out that the rate of population growth had led to an increase in the potential labour force which had not been matched by the employment opportunities. It is difficult to obtain reliable information about unemployment because available figures are based on the number of people who register as unemployed at the Ministry of Labour. This by no means includes all the unemployed in the country. Even so, it should be noted that registered unemployment rose by 3.7 per cent between 1977/1978 and 1978/1979. With the hosting of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Assembly in Sierra Leone in 1980 there was some increase in employment especially in the areas of building and construction and the hotel industry. However, it is not expected that this increase due to OAU-generated activities will be permanent. Major private establishments have tended to maintain staffing at existing levels and in some cases even to reduce their complement. The public sector,which absorbs most of the educated manpower, is putting restrictions on employment so employment opportunities will increasingly have to be sought in the private sector and greater attention will have to be paid to the possibilities of self-employment.

It is against this background of disappointing growth in the economy, increased government borrowing and increased unemployment that one should view the problems encountered by young girls and women who wish to secure jobs. Employment opportunities are limited even for educated young people who in more favourable circumstances would be easily absorbed within the public sector. It is not surprising to note that women who are illiterate and young girls who have incomplete primary or secondary education or unsatisfactory results on completion of their schooling are at a marked disadvantage in the pursuit of jobs. Many of them become the clientele for out-of-school programmes, through which they hope to acquire skills which will increase their chances of getting jobs.

2/ Kpedekpo, C.M.R, The current status of population and employment planning in Sierra Leone; paper contributed to the National Seminar on Population, Employment and Development Planning in Sierra Leone, 1980.

Since Sierra Leone was originally a United Kingdom colony, it is not surprising that the educational system was modelled on that country's pattern. The formal school system comprises seven years of primary schooling culminating in the Selective Entrance Examination which determines whether or not a pupil is admitted to a secondary school. This is followed by five years of secondary education leading to the General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level examination or the West African School Certificate examination. A further period of two years can be spent in the sixth form in preparation for the General Certificate of Education at advanced level. At the tertiary level, the University of Sierra Leone offers first degree and post graduate courses in the arts, pure and applied sciences, economic and social sciences, education, engineering and agriculture. There are also a number of sub-degree courses leading to diplomas and certificates.

The University of Sierra Leone consists of colleges and institutes such as Fourah Bay College, Njala University College, The Institute of Education, the Institute of Marine Biology and the Institute of Public Administration and Management under the direction of the Vice Chancellor and Principals and Directors of colleges and institutes.

There are six teacher training colleges which provide courses for non-graduate teachers at Higher Teacners Certificate and Teachers Certificate levels. Two technical institutes and two trade centres offer courses in technical and commercial subjects. The Ministry of Education has overall control of schools and teacher training colleges, technical institutes and the trade centre. Most of the schools were orginally private bodies owned by churches, local authorities or private individuals. They are now administered by Boards of Governors appointed by the Minister of Education reflecting government interest as well as the interest of the original sponsoring body. Most schools receive financial assistance from the government particularly for the payment of teachers. There are in addition some government schools and some private schools.

Following the tradition of the grammar schools in the United Kingdom and also in response to the eighteenth and nineteenth century need for theologians, clerks and administrators the curriculum in schools in Sierra Leone was until recently heavily biased towards academic subjects. There have been increasing complaints about the lack of technical commercial, agricultural and more practical subjects which will be more suitable for the abilities and aptitudes of many children and will also be more relevant to the training needed to supply the altered manpower needs of the country. Consequently from 1970 the Sierra Leone Government has received World Bank/ IDA loans to diversify the curriculum. There have been two IDA projects for 1970-1976 and 1975-1980 and a third is under consideration. These projects give an indication of the attempts made through educational planning and within the formal education sector to prepare children to take advantage of employment opportunities and further skill training opportunities.

The first Project included the following objectives:-

(a) Diversifying the secondary school curriculum by putting greater emphasis on agriculture, commerce, home-management and technical subjects with a view to imparting basic skills necessary for employment; and

(b) Increasing the amount of technical and vocational training in order to train more indigenous personnel for employment in the industrial sector.

The second project included among its aims the need to:

(a) Improve courses so that secondary school leavers would respond better to training which would lead to their being employed or would facilitate their absorption into the labour market;

(b) Encourage rural and non-formal education; and

(c) Improve educational planning, management and management training.

The objectives of both projects include one of the central interests of this study i.e. the need to give young people skill training to enable them to get employment. Some of the areas identified as being necessary for diversification of the curriculum, i.e. agriculture, home-management and commercial subjects, are areas on which attention has been focussed in this study in the consideration of out-of-school education for women and girls.

The issue of access to education especially with regard to the position of women needs to be examined in order to get a proper perspective against which the problems of unemployment and vocational training can be viewed. There has been an increase of about 46 per cent in the number of pupils attending primary schools between 1969/1970 and 1977/1978. The government decision in 1976 that pupils from classes 5 to 7 should be exempted from paying tuition fees also led to an increase in enrolment. In spite of the increase, it is estimated that under 40 per cent of the primary school age pupils i.e. 5-11 years actually attend school.

Table 1: Pupil Enrolment as a proportion of primary-school-age population

Age	Enrolment as proportion of school-age population	
	Boys	Girls
5	36.7	28.0
6	47.1	33.4
7	48.1	32.2
8	42.0	28.6
9	39.4	25.7
10	35.2	24.1
11	31.7	20.8

SOURCE: Figures obtained from final report on access to school, 1977/78.

The enrolment of girls is low in comparison with the enrolment of boys. As Samai[5/] commented, when funds are limited, investment in the education of girls is often considered less likely to yield good returns than that of boys, so preference is given to the latter.

At the end of the primary school course, pupils sit to the Selective Entrance Examination. This is a screening device used to determine which pupils will be selected for admission to secondary school. There is a non-selection rate of about 40 per cent. In this way access to secondary education is restricted. If pupils aged 12-16 are regarded as secondary school pupils, then an indication of the extent of access to secondary education can be obtained from the following figures:-

Table 2: Secondary school enrolment as a proportion of secondary-school-age population

Age	Enrolment as proportion of school-age population	
	Boys	Girls
12	27.1	15.3
13	20.6	11.1
14	12.4	4.5
15	5.3	1.4
16+	2.4	0.4

SOURCE: Figures obtained from the final report on access to school, 1977/78.

Girls obviously have a lower rate of access to both primary and secondary education than boys. The task of providing out-of-school education for non-schoolers is therefore particularly relevant in the case of women.

Of the relatively limited number of girls who succeed in gaining access to secondary school many drop out of school without completing the full cycle. This is not only a waste of public and private investment in their education, but it creates a problem with children who have certain job expectations which will not now be realized. Two factors militate against these dropouts. First as indicated above, the economic difficulties facing the country have led to restrictions in employment opportunities.

5/ Samai, R.A. Demographic factors and educational expansion in Sierra Leone, paper contributed to the National Seminar on Population, Employment and Development Planning in Sierra Leone, 1980.

Secondly, because of their educational attainment, ability to profit from on-the-job training and their attitude to work, employers generally prefer individuals with higher educational qualifications[4]. For these dropout girls, non-formal education is often the only means by which they can increase their chances of getting jobs.

Reasons why these girls drop out of school must be taken into account when designing non-formal programmes for them. A variety of academic, social and economic factors seem to be associated with this problem. May-Parker[5], in a study of dropout girls from secondary schools in Sierra Leone, identified the following reasons:-

Table 3: Reasons for Girls dropping out of school

Reason	Percentage
Pregnancy	53.9
Academic problems	16.5
Financial problems	10.4
Unsatisfactory behaviour	4.3
School asked her to leave	1.8
Illness	1.8
Marriage	2.7
Went abroad	0.9
Reason not known	7.8
TOTAL PERCENTAGE	100.1

Out-of-school programmes sometimes run into difficulties e.g. over financial contributions from the girls, absenteeism due to domestic and child-care duties, which originate from the same reasons which caused the girls to leave the formal school system in the first place. The response to these programmes, as well as the level of achievement of the participants at the end of the course are partly dependent on the extent to which these issues can be resolved.

Some girls who complete the secondary school course also become the clientele in out-of-school courses. This situation arises out of the poor performance at GCE 'O' level examinations which has been a cause for concern in recent years. In the Education Sector Review (1976) reference was made to the fact that the number of candidates who obtain four GCE 'O' levels has been decreasing since 1965. Also there was a drop from 19 per

4/ Blang M., Education and the employment problem in developing countries in Woodhall, M., Education, Employment and Work, a summary review, International Development Research Centre, 1981.

5/ May-Parker, J., A study on attitudes and home background factors associated with wastage among secondary school girls in Sierra Leone. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, 1977.

cent pass rate in 1966 to 15.9 per cent in 1977. The number of high-level passes i.e. grade 2 and above was also low, comprising only 33.7 per cent of the successful candidates. It is not surprising therefore, that many school leavers require out-of-school education to upgrade their educational level and to obtain skills which are needed in the labour market.

The participation of girls in technical courses is often confined to areas which lead to employment in traditionally female occupations. Unfortunately recent figures were not readily available, but for the 1972/73 session female students in technical and vocational education courses constituted only 0.5 per cent of the enrolment in technical courses but 70.6 per cent of the enrolment in commercial courses. This is still the general trend. The consequences of this tendency is that women cannot take full advantage of employment opportunities in technical enterprises. In a report[6/] it was stressed that although technical courses are open to women, they generally lack information about the openings available to them in technolo-ical occupations. The report also pointed to the lack of facilities in subjects like technical drawing, woodwork and metalwork in girls' schools. Even in co-educational schools where these technical subjects were offered, girls were invariably found in home economics or other 'feminine' courses. In this study one of the projects examined (the national workshop apprenticeship training scheme) illustrates the attempt being made by some girls to acquire technical skills through out-of-school education.

Conclusion

The economic and educational problems outlined above are by no means peculiar to Sierra Leone. Woodhall[7/] refers to a UNESCO Symposium on Educational Planning Human Resources and Employment in which the major problems identified in developing countries included illiteracy, poverty, inequitable income distribution and underemployment especially of educated youth. Possible solutions which were suggested included increasing the vocational content of formal schooling, breaking the link between job recruitment and educational certification, introducing life-long education and increasing the provision of out-of-school education. Woodhall points to another possible solution through functional literacy programmes with economic objectives and employment opportunities. She cautions however that evaluations of these literacy programmes have indicated that they have not been as successful as was expected with regard to productive employment. In the Sierra Leone Education Review the establishment of Community Education Centres was recommended. They would enrol non-schoolers and youths with some primary education. The curriculum would emphasise permanent literacy and skills and knowledge necessary for earning a living. A variety of other suggestions have been made for solving the problems of non-schoolers dropouts and school leavers. The case studies presented here illustrate attempts to use out-of-school education to minimize some of the educational and economic problems with which the formal educational system has been unable to come to terms.

6/ UNESCO, Education, training and employment opportunities for women, commissioned in collaboration with ILO, (Taylor-Pearce Report), 1974

7/ Woodhall, M. op.cit.

II. PURPOSE AND DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to conduct case studies of out-of-school programmes for women and girls in Sierra Leone. The intention was to study some programmes, find out their objectives, their mode of operation, their strengths and weaknesses and identify areas in which improvements could be made. It was hoped that this would not only give an insight into out-of-school programmes for women in Sierra Leone but provide information which could be useful to other countries for comparative purposes.

The study was designed to be conducted over a six-week period. Unfortunately the data collection took longer than expected because the period scheduled for it coincided with a series of public holidays as well as the vacation period for some of the courses. Some classes were slow in resuming their normal pace at the beginning of the term. Others were functioning below their normal attendance because some participants were sent home at the beginning of the term for non-payment of fees. Visits to typing establishments were affected by the fact that some participants were taking external examinations.

Programmes studied were located in different areas of Sierra Leone, covering both urban and rural areas of the western area and the southern and eastern provinces. However, the majority of the programmes considered were in the western area. This was partly a result of time constraints which made it difficult to travel extensively. It was also due to the fact that information on on-going programmes was more easily available for the western area and in cases where similar programmes existed in other parts of the country, they seemed to be better established in the western area.

The women who were covered by the study were of three levels of education i.e.

(a) Women who had never attended school;

(b) Women and girls who had not completed primary or secondary school; and

(c) Girls who had reached the higher forms of secondary school but had not obtained the qualifications or acquired the skills which they desired.

The first four programmes observed were for men and women and the rest were almost exclusively for women, the only exception being one of the typing establishments which admitted a few men.

(i) National workshop apprenticeship scheme.

(ii) Functional literacy programme (CUSO).

(iii) Village health workers.

(iv) Opportunities Industrialization Centre.

(v) Young Women's Christian Association Development classes.

(vi) United Methodist Church Women's Programme.

(vii) Typing establishments.

(viii) Sewing establishments.

(ix) St. Mary's Vocational School.

(x) Pujehun Community Education Centre.

The data were collected in the following stages:-

(a) Initial visit to the institution to discuss the purpose of the study with the organizers and to obtain permission to observe the programme;

(b) Second visit to have discussions with the organizers and instructors and to obtain background information about the programme;

(c) Subsequent visits to observe participants at work, administer questionnaires and interview some of the women and girls;

(d) Final visits for concluding discussions with organizers and instructors to clarify issues which had been mentioned by the participants.

In some cases, participants completed the questionnaires themselves, but in others it was felt that the chances of receiving properly completed questionnaires would be increased if the investigator completed the questionnaire. That was a time-consuming process.

III. NATIONAL WORKSHOP, APPRENTICESHIP SCHEME

The national workshop has a programme for training male and female apprentices in technical skills. It also has a much less rigorous programme for training girls in various handicrafts. The programme was started in 1980 and is located in Cline Town which is in the east end of Freetown. Although there are on-going activities, the workshop has not yet been formally inaugurated. The intention is that when the national workshop has been properly established, in addition to carrying out its training functions, it will be granted company status and will become an autonomous commercial enterprise focusing on the production of agricultural tools and implements as well as utensils for domestic use.

Attention will focus on the apprentice scheme because greater stress is put on the training element in this programme than in the section where girls are trained in handicrafts. The apprenticeship programme is of a higher level.

The apprenticeship programme was initiated because it became apparent that many of the existing skilled workers were reaching the age of retirement, and training facilities which existed were not adequate for training young school leavers who could continue to provide skilled services. In addition to the need to replace the existing number of skilled workers as they grew older, it was felt that, with the growing demand for the provision of skilled services in Sierra Leone, it was also necessary to increase the stock of indigenous personnel trained in technical fields. These objectives provided the rationale for establishing a training component at the national workshop.

The Sierra Leonean Government recognizes the need for this kind of training programme by giving financial support in the form of salaries and wages for staff. The release of government property and buildings originally used by the Sierra Leone Railway, for the use of the national workshop, provides further evidence of government support. Additional funding for recurrent expenditure is obtained from the sale of goods made at the national workshop.

The national workshop provides a good illustration of how existing structures and equipment can be utilized in a new programme, thereby reducing costs.

The staffing situation in the national workshop provides an example of the possibility of combining the services and expertise of Sierra Leoneans with those of expatriates to increase efficiency. Hungarian personnel give administrative and professional advice and services which are vital at the initiation of any programme. Sierra Leoneans who are either trained or undergoing training provide administrative and technical services which will ensure the continued existence of the programme. At present some Sierra Leoneans have been sent abroad for training which will make them adequately qualified to become instructors in the training school which is part of the national workshop. One measure of the success of the workshop will be the extent to which Sierra Leonean staff can replace the expatriates.

At present the Chairman of the national workshop is a Sierra Leonean. Members of staff include:-

- Production Manager
- Secretary and Personnel Manager
- Pupil mechanical engineers
- Supervisors and officers in charge of workshops
- Instructors for the training school
- Artisans
- Clerks and typists
- Security guards, labourers, drivers and watchmen.

Enquiries were made to discover the criteria which were used to determine admission into the apprentice programme. It was reported that since the inception of the programme, there had been 500 male and female applicants of whom only 144 had been accepted. There are constraints on the number of apprentices who can be accepted because of inadequacy of funds to pay wages and salaries for a larger number of apprentices or to support the increased number of staff necessary for their training; lack of equipment; and the unsatisfactory level of educational attainment of some applicants. At the time of the visit to the workshop there were only 12 female apprentices. The degree of female participation was low in relation to the over-all enrolment. However, in view of the fact that female participation in technical training programmes in Sierra Leone is very low, it was encouraging to find even some girls involved in this programme.

These female apprentices were aged between 16 and 22. Ten of them were single and were living with parents or relatives. One was married and another who was responsible for two of her younger sisters lived with her boyfriend. Their fathers were mostly skilled or unskilled workers and most mothers were either full-time housewives or housewives who were also engaged in some petty trading.

The minimum educational qualification usually required for application to enter the course is education up to form 3 level at a recognized secondary school. Applicants should have some competence in mathematics and basic science subjects. Those who satisfy these conditions are then given an entrance examination to determine whether they can be admitted. The following responses were obtained when enquiries were made about the highest form which they had attained in secondary school.

Table 4: Educational attainment of apprentices

Highest Form Attained	Number of Apprentices
Form 2	1
Form 3	5
Form 4	2
Form 5	4
T O T A L	12

As far as educational background was concerned all but one of the apprentices had satisfied the minimum requirement. Since eight of them had left school before getting to Form 5, the programmes clearly cater for girls who have dropped out of school without completing the full secondary-school course. Even in the case of the four girls who had reached fifth form level, there are reservations about the level of their attainment. One reported that she had left school in the middle of the fifth form course and others who had completed the year had not obtained good 'O' level results in the General Certificate of Education examination.

Information was sought on the reasons why these girls had left school. This would be particularly useful in the case of those who had not completed secondary school.

Table 5: Reasons for leaving school

Reasons for Leaving School	Number of Responses
Financial difficulty	6
Illness	1
Objected to repeating a class	1
Hoped to go abroad	1
Had reached form 5	3
T O T A L	12

Financial problems over payment of school fees and other expenses were mostly responsible for early withdrawals from school. One apprentice who had left school in form 3 explained that her father had asked her to discontinue her schooling because he could not afford to pay fees for all his children. Since she had already benefited from several years of education, he felt it was fair that she should now give her younger siblings an opportunity to get some education. She reported that she had left school in 1976 and two of her siblings were now in forms 1 and 3 respectively. Another girl revealed that her father had died and there was no one to take over the responsibility of paying fees for the children. As she was the eldest she had been compelled to leave school and begin to do some petty trading to earn money towards the upkeep of the family.

The national workshop pays apprentices during their training. This is very appropriate in a situation where several of the apprentices are obviously faced with financial difficulties.

Table 6: Rate of payment of apprentices at national workshop

Year of Apprenticeship	Daily Rate (in Leones)
1st	2.05
2nd	2.13
3rd	2.20
4th	2.27

This is in contrast to some other training scheme described in this report where no payment is made to trainees. It is not surprising that in these schemes girls leave as soon as they can produce articles on their own. This is a realistic decision in cases of financial hardship.

During the interviews enquiries were made about how the girls had found out about the existence of an apprentice scheme at the national workshop, whether the decision to seek admission had been made on their own accord and what their motives were for enrolling in the course.

Table 7: Means of learning about the existence of the course

Source of Information	Number of Responses
Saw advertisement or article in local newspaper	3
Told by friend or relative who was a worker/trainee at the national workshop or told by friend or relative who knew a worker/trainee	8
Resided near the national workshop	1
TOTAL	12

For these female apprentices, publicity for the national workshop course came mainly from individuals who were already participating in the programme as workers or trainees. This is encouraging in so far as it is indicative of confidence in the programme on the part of people who are already involved in it. However, if the intention is to increase the enrolment of female apprentices in the future, and to broaden the intake beyond the immediate circle of acquaintances of workers and trainees, then other publicity avenues need to be explored.

In response to a question about who had made the decision that the girl was to embark on the apprenticeship course, ten of the girls reported that the decision was their's and two reported that parents of relatives had done so. The intention of the question was to discover whether enrolment had been voluntary or as a result of pressure being put on the girl. The response was clearly that these girls had willingly agreed to come to the national workshop. Even in the two cases where other people had taken the decision, only in one case had the girl disagreed and then because she would have preferred to seek admission to another secondary school within the formal system.

In a country like Sierra Leone where very few girls opt for technical training, it was interesting to probe further to find our what motivated these particular girls to become apprentices.

Table 8: Reasons for enrolling in apprenticeship course

Reasons	Number of Responses
Economic advantage of skill acquisition	8
Love for a particular job	2
Opportunity to increase knowledge	2
Opportunity to have a different experience	1
TOTAL	13

NOTE: One apprentice gave two reasons, so the total adds up to 13.

Clearly these girls recognized the financial advantages of acquiring skills in technical fields. This needs to be related to the fact that prior to enrolling in this course most of them had some other job experience (see table 9). The nature of their experience and financial renumeration in these jobs might have clarified their views about the type of training which would be beneficial to them.

Table 9: Job experience before apprenticeship

Job	Number of Responses
Cashier in hotel	1
Sales girl in a music shop	1
Typist	1
Trainee composer at printer's	1
Tally clerk	1
Trainee auto-electrician	1
Petty trader	3
Attending typing classes	1
No job experience	2
TOTAL	12

Only one girl (the trainee auto-electrician) had any job experience which was related to the apprenticeship course which the girls were now undergoing. The girls had left school at various dates between 1974 and 1980 yet even those who had left school several years before were still experiencing difficulty in securing and retaining their jobs. The job experience indicated in table 9 did not necessarily imply regular employment. For instance one of the apprentices who had left school in 1975 had secured a job selling cassettes in a music shop, but she had been forced to leave because she did not like working late in the evenings. She had subsequently spent three years looking for a job without success. Another girl who had been engaged as a typist had her services terminated and had been unable to get another job. These girls had therefore experienced difficulty because in a restricted labour market, they could not compete with other school leavers who had GCE 'O' levels or other qualifications and skills which employers valued. The training upon which they had now embarked at the national workshop was an attempt to overcome their disadvantaged position in the labour market.

The apprenticeship course is of four years' duration at the end of which the apprentices are expected to take the trade test under Sierra Leone regulations. The more competent apprentices may then go on

to the Freetown Technical Institute to train more rigorously for the City and Guilds examination. It was mentioned that one female apprentice had in fact been transferred from the national workshop to the Technical Institute to pursue a course in auto electricity.

The programme for the apprentices is planned to combine theoretical instruction at the training school with practical experience in the workshops. One of the buidlings within the national workshop compound is therefore used as a training school. The plan is that the apprentices should have a six-day week and one day in each week should be devoted to theory at the training school, the remaining five days being used for practical work. Each apprentice will then spend a six-week period in each of the workshops. Experience in the workshop should be given in rotation so that only a limited number of apprentices are in a particular workshop at any one time. However, the Training School is not yet properly established because of a lack of instructors. In order to rectify this situation some members of staff have been sent abroad to upgrade their qualifications. Consequently, at the moment the theoretical aspect of the programme has not been functioning satisfactorily.

The training school curriculum covers, mathematical calculations; general science; engineering drawing and workshop practice. When the apprentices have had some experience in the workshops, the decision about their area of specialization is taken on the basis of the assessment given by supervisors of workshops. There are 16 workshops:-

1. Machine shop
2. Toolroom
3. Blacksmith shop
4. Foundry shop
5. Metal fabrication shop
6. Welding shop
7. Coppersmith shop
8. Millwright shop
9. Vehicle maintenance and repair shop
10. Heavy machinery and plant shop
11. Electrical shop
12. Sawmill
13. Carpentry shop
14. Refrigeration shop
15. Plating shop.
16. General operations.

An attempt was made to find out the girls' reaction to their workshop experience. It was impossible to come to a conclusion because the girls had not yet had experience in all the workshops. On the whole they remarked

that so far the experience had been interesting and the tasks which they were asked to carry out were well within their capabilities. It was interesting to note that two apprentices who indicated some dislike for particular workshops explained that this was because the work was too strenuous. It is to be expected that even though girls are now beginning to show a greater interest in technical training, they might show preferences for certain areas which they do not find as physically demanding as others.

On completion of their training, apprentices are bonded to continue working at the national workshop for a period equivalent to the time which they spent receiving training. It was thought useful to find out what the apprentices would really prefer to do at the end of the course, if not required to give their service to the national workshop.

Table 10: Preferred occupation of apprentices

Preferred Occupation	Number of Responses
Employment at national workshop	5
Be self-employed	2
Employment at national workshop combined with private jobs after work	2
Employment at national workshop combined with private jobs after work leading eventually to self-employment	2
Undecided	1
T O T A L	12

There is a possibility that some girls found it difficult to disregard knowledge of their bond and that the responses which they gave as their preferred occupation were really statements of what they regarded as unavoidable. However, a few of them added comments which were revealing.

One pointed to a lack of self-confidence when she commented, "I want to work at the national workshop. I do not want to work for myself because I will need to make more goods and I will have to get them ready for the time when the customer wants them. I will be in trouble if its not ready. At the national workshop my boss will be responsible not me". Another girl pinpointed the difficulty of getting capital to purchase equipment to practise their trade privately. She explained, "I will like to work for myself if I can get money to buy tools, but it is difficult". This is a problem which will have to be faced as more apprentices complete their training. Eventually the national workshop might not be able to absorb all the apprentices. In any case some of them might want to become self-employed after gaining experience and confidence by working at the national workshop for an initial period. For those girls who are sufficiently confident and ambitious to become self-employed some mechanism will have to be devised for providing advice from the instructors and supervisors at the workshop to those who have just set up business on their own. There will also be a need for obtaining credit facilities to enable them to build small workshops and purchase equipment and tools. These girls, coming as they generally do from families who are in the lower socio-economic status, will certainly have to seek credit facilities outside their family resources.

A most laudable aspect of the apprenticeship training scheme is that it gives an opportunity for girls to participate in areas which have usually been monopolized by men. In order to sustain female participation, methods of publicizing the programme must be reviewed. If the suspicion is justified that eventually not all the girls will be employed by the national workshop, then links will need to be established with other employment agencies. For those who will become self-employed, consideration will have to be given to developing their self-confidence, designing practical and inexpensive workshops suitable for the Sierra Leonean environment and obtaining credit facilities.

Since the participation of women in technical courses in Sierra Leone is usually most inadequate, the female participants at the national workshop need to be carefully monitored during their training to find out their reaction to the programme and their performance in the course. This might provide valuable insights into strategies to be employed to attract more women to these areas. On completion of the course it would be profitable to follow-up their subsequent job experience and performance. This can provide useful information about the financial, professional and other assistance which could be given to ensure that these girls do in fact make optimum use of their skills. Unless women and girls acquire technical skills they will automatically be denied access to a whole range of jobs within the modern sector of the economy. Unless women can demonstrate to their employers, parents and members of the general public that they can make an impact on the economy through the utilization of technical skills which they have acquired, the tendency to prefer investment in the education of boys will persist. The disadvantageous position in which women find themselves within the formal education sector will then be perpetuated in out-of-school programmes.

IV. PRIVATE SEWING ESTABLISHMENTS

Another group of institutions which were studied were those in which groups of girls are taught to sew children's dresses. In recent years there has been a growth in sewing establishments run by male tailors, many of whom are from neighbouring Guinea. Often there is a 'master' tailor who is assisted by apprentices who help in sewing dresses given to the 'master' tailor. As the apprentices become more competent they begin to take on jobs of their own by arrangement with the 'master' tailor. Ultimately they may branch off to open their own establishment. These tailors have specialized in sewing for adults. Although some of them also sew children's clothes, this has not been their area of concentration. It appears that another dimension is being added to the tailoring industry with the growth of establishments within the Freetown area such as the ones described below which are operated by a proprietress assisted by young female apprentices. Their activities are concentrated on sewing dresses for children.

Regrettably, with the time available for this study, it was not practicable to draw up an inventory of these establishments even within the Freetown area, so it was not possible to estimate the extent of their growth. However, three establishments were visited in the Freetown area.

These sewing rooms-cum-salesrooms were established to satisfy the demand for locally produced 'ready-made' dresses to suit the needs of mothers who either lacked the time and expertise to sew dresses for their children or could ill afford to spend time chasing dressmakers who often failed to complete dresses on schedule even when the material had been given to them well ahead of time. Thus instead of having to purchase expensive imported dresses for their children, mothers could now have the opportunity of purchasing moderately priced dresses which were reasonably well made and were easily available.

The most active establishment was owned by a lady who was herself a dressmaker, but who now managed the business side of the activities rather than the actual sewing. Unfortunately, although three visits were paid to the workshop, it was not possible to meet the proprietress because on each occasion she had travelled out of Freetown.

Eight girls aged between 15 and 22 were participating in this particular training when visits were made. Seven of them were single but the eldest was married with two children. Problems of combining child care with long hours spent away from home did not arise in this group, because the only participant who had children explained that they were aged nine and five and, when they were not at school, neighbours were willing to take care of them until she got home.

Their educational background ranged from four girls who had never been to school or had only had a few years of primary school to four who had received one or two years of secondary schooling. Since the programme was completely practical, aptitude and willingness to learn seemed adequate. A high level of attainment in the formal education sector was not essential.

The training takes place in a sewing room-cum-salesroom in the east end of Freetown. The pattern of operation is that the more experienced and competent girls cut out the dresses. Since there are only five electric sewing machines, the girls have to take turns using them. The beginners start off by going shopping for materials such as buttons, thread and lace and observing the more experienced girls cutting out and sewing dresses. Gradually the newcomers will be allowed to use the sewing machines.

The income-generating aspect of the training programme is quite clearly perceived by the girls, because as dresses are completed they are put in plastic packets and displayed for sale in the shop. Prices vary from Le 3.00 to Le 4.50 for ordinary dresses. Christening robes are more expensive. In a few cases where clients bring their own material with special requests for dresses, charges are limited to labour costs.

The working and financial arrangements are informal. Working hours are somewhat flexible. The girls usually arrive around 9 a.m. and work until anytime between 4:30 p.m. and 7 p.m. depending on the volume of the work. Since the girls spend rather long hours in the sewing room without going home, the proprietress who lives in the house in which the sewing room is located provides the girls with one cooked meal free of charge daily. It must be noted at this point that the girls do not pay any tuition fees but all their services i.e. cutting, sewing and buying of materials are given free. They do not earn any income from the proceeds of dresses sold for the proprietress. However, occasionally, those girls who have access to a sewing machine at home, absent themselves from the sewing room so that they can do a private job. Sometimes they also take on private jobs which are done in the sewing room. Thus as they become more experienced they begin to earn income even while they are undergoing training.

The relationship between the girls and their proprietress as well as among the girls themselves is very amicable and relaxed. For instance the girls informed me that whenever one of them is ill and is absent even for just a day or two the others go in a group to visit her after work. They also reported that the proprietress knows their boyfriends and permits occasional visits to the workshop and queries them if a new boyfriend whom she does not know begins paying visits. This 'family' atmosphere, in which the girls realize that the proprietress is not only interested in their welfare but appreciates the fact that they need to have a social life, probably encourages these girls to come to the workshop regularly and on some occasions to even indicate in advance when they will be absent. In fact it was interesting to note that when a second visit was paid immediately prior to a series of public holidays, the girls explained that it would be better to postpone the next visit for a few days after they were normally expected to resume work, because some of them would not have got over the holiday feeling yet, and would therefore not be ready to return to work. They had no reservations about passing on this information.

The second establishment which was visited was much smaller than the first one and more recently opened. It had only four girls in training. The mode of operation was similar to that of the first establishment. One feature which needs to be mentioned about the second workshop is that the proprietress has a full-time job elsewhere. Her supervision is limited to visits to the shop on her way home from work or the purchasing of materials and some of the cutting out. There is also a male tailor attached to the workshop. He does some cutting out of the children's dresses and also sews

dresses for adult women. The girls learn from him and each other, but their activities are confined to sewing for children.

The third establishment is taken as illustration of the difficulties which can confront these ventures. The proprietress is a dressmaker who at one time had about six female apprentices. However, at the time of the visit she did not have any girls undergoing training. She had therefore decided to do her dressmaking at home and leave her sister in the workshop-cum-salesroom to sell the children's dresses which she made. When questioned about the lack of trainees she gave the following explanation:

(a) The girls were not committed to dressmaking as a vocation;

(b) As soon as the girls had received training which they regarded as adequate and provided they had a sewing machine at home, they left the workshop to set up business on their own; and

(c) The girls resented having to pay tuition fees and in fact refused to do so.

Her criticisms pinpoint the weaknesses which exist in all of these workshops, although the third one seems to have been particularly badly hit. It is true that some of the girls choose to undergo training in sewing because alternative employment is not easy to obtain especially since they have little or no formal education. In this case whenever a job is obtained, the girls leave the sewing rooms.

The question of tuition fees has not been properly resolved in any of the workshops. In the first one, the informal arrangement of providing a meal for the girls and allowing them to take on the occasional private job eased the situation. Even then, some of them stayed away from time to time to work at home.

The feeling that girls are disloyal to the proprietress if they leave as soon as they have received some training is understandable from the point of view of the proprietress. Having trained the girl, she looks forward to increased production from her, only to be confronted with her leaving. From the girl's point of view, however, it indicates that she feels that the programme has been successful i.e. she has been taught to sew sufficiently well to get jobs on her own.

Although all the workshops complained that business was not brisk, this must be viewed in the light of a slump in many businesses in Sierra Leone today. It is therefore not a feature which is peculiar to these sewing establishments. In the long run, it seems that these workshops have a promising future. There is always a market for children's clothes. As more women get full-time jobs which necessitate their spending most of the day out of their homes, the demand for these services is likely to increase. The tradition of the full-time housewife and mother who does all the cooking, laundry, cleaning and dressmaking for the family is not as universal as in former years.

The practical nature of the training received in the workshops is emphasized by the fact that the girls do not work towards obtaining a certificate. The proof of their competence lies solely in their ability

to sew dresses which are marketable. This is in contrast to other programmes which give training leading up to certificates but which do not pay adequate attention to ensuring that the girls end up being capable of producing goods which can be sold.

The most encouraging aspect of this type of establishment is that, right from the start, it establishes a clear link between the skill acquisition and income-generating elements of the programme. The fact that some of the girls leave to start working on their own is probably the best indication of the success of their training programme.

V. THE YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION DEVELOPMENT CLASSES

The Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) has organized a 'development class' in response to the need to provide some educational courses and vocational training for girls who dropped out of school at either the primary or the secondary school level.

The underlying principle in these classes is that regardless of the level of the girls when they started attending the classes, some improvement will take place as a result of their attendance. In fact these classes were originally called "improvement classes". The intention was that these classes would not be restricted to girls who had had some exposure to the formal school system, but would have a broader intake and include girls who had never attended school. The illiterate girls could acquire basic literacy as well as benefit from the vocational aspect of the classes. Unfortunately, the programme has not been successful in maintaining the interest of non-schoolers. At the time when visits were paid to the group, the co-ordinator explained that there were no illiterate girls because those who had registered felt embarassed when they had to mix with other girls who had attended school. Consequently the illiterate participants had gradually dropped out of the classes.

This programme provides an example of the multipurpose use of physical facilities with its accompanying advantages and disadvantages. Classes take place in a two-storey building which is owned by the Young Women's Christian Assocation. There is a hall on the ground floor and several rooms on the top floor. The hall in which the development classes are held in the evenings is used as a nursery school during the morning hours. The girls use the tables, chairs and kitchen facilities used for the nursery school earlier in the day. The co-ordinator complained that on days when all the participants attend the development classes, the adult-sized chairs are inadequate because most of the chairs are for nursery age children. The kitchen space is also inadequate when the girls have practical cookery classes. There are undoubtedly inconveniences in sharing facilities. Yet the advantage of not having the expense of purchasing furniture specifically for the programme must not be underestimated.

The course is designed to be completed in two years with classes being held from Monday to Friday between 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. There are three terms in the school year. One reason why the courses are scheduled for the evenings is that the instructors usually have full time jobs elsewhere. Secondly, it is expected that these girls will either be employed or engaged in domestic duties during the day. At the end of the course participants get a certificate confirming that they have attended the classes.

The staff consists of a co-ordinator and nine other instructors. The co-ordinator, who is an experienced teacher, is responsible for registration of the girls, allocating duties to other teachers and generally ensuring that the course progresses smoothly and efficiently. At the time of the visit to the development class, all but one of the instructors were full-time teachers within the formal school system. Instructors come into the classes only on specific days when the course for which they are responsible is on the timetable. The Young Women's Christian Association has therefore not had the expense of training instructors specifically for this programme. This has undoubtedly reduced the cost of launching the course. However, in view of the fact that these instructors were trained to function within the formal school system and their teaching experience has been confined to that area, it would be worth considering the possibility of providing in-service training which would give them a better orientation towards running non-formal courses.

The objectives of the programme are to ensure that the girls:

(a) Improve the education which they have received in their primary and secondary schools;

(b) Acquire skills which will enable them to get employment;

(c) Develop desirable attitudes to work;

(d) Improve on their personal hygiene and grooming;

(e) Develop good moral values.

Emphasis is put on the practical rather than the theoretical aspects of the programme.

The curriculum is comprised of the following subjects:

Nutrition and catering: The girls are taught the basic principles underlying good nutrition. They are also given practical experience in cooking simple African and European dishes.

Family life education: Members of staff of an organization which gives information, guidance and counselling about family life are invited to talk to girls about various aspects of family life including sex education and family planning.

Sewing: This is done by hand as no sewing machines are provided for the programme. The girls have to provide their own materials so they usually bring bits of materials from home or old dresses which can be converted to articles such as skirts, children's dresses or half slips.

Handicrafts: This includes crafts such as macrame, rug making with wool, crochet and embroidery.

Hairdressing: The girls are taught the basic elements of washing, straightening and styling hair.

Fifty-six girls were officially registered for the course during the 1980/1981 session. However, many of them attended irregularly and some of them discontinued the classes without informing the co-ordinator. However, at least 40 of them attend regularly and 20 were interviewed for this study. Visits were paid towards the end of the term so many girls were absent. The co-ordinator identified the following reasons for their absenteeism.

(a) Girls had got discouraged towards the end of term. Since pupils in the formal school system had ended their term these girls in the development class felt reluctant to continue attending classes;

(b) Some girls had been sent home by the co-ordinator for non-payment of fees.

Information about the age of the girls and the forms in which they had dropped out of school was obtained from the registration forms which they had completed for the 1980/1981 session.

Table 11: Age of participants

Age	Number
14-16 years	30
17-19 years	14
20-22 years	3
Adult	3
No response	6
T O T A L	56

Table 12: Class at which girls left school

Class/Form	Number Of Girls
No schooling	2
Class 5	2
Class 6	0
Class 7	14
Form 1	14
Form 2	16
Form 3	6
Form 4	1
No response	1
T O T A L	56

NOTE: Class 5-7 are the fifth to seventh classes in the seven-year primary school course. Forms 1-4 are the first four forms in the secondary school.

The girls registered for these classes are therefore mostly aged between 14 and 16 years and have generally dropped out of school between the end of the primary school course and the second year of the secondary education.

Further information was then obtained from the 20 girls who were interviewed specifically for this study.

Table 13: Reasons for dropping out of school

Reason	Number Of Responses
Unable to cope with academic standards	11
Unable to pay fees	6
Illness	1
Difficulties with teacher	1
No response	1
T O T A L	20

The organizers seemed justified in assuming that many of these girls would benefit from a more practical approach to their education since most of them had no more than two years of secondary education at the best and explained that they could not cope with academic standards in the formal education system. One girl commented about the development classes: "I like these classes. I do not have brains for school work, but I can work with my hands."

An attempt was made to find out how much time had elapsed between their leaving school and starting to attend the development class. They were also asked to indicate how they had occupied themselves in the interim.

Table 14: Interim period between school and development classes

Interim Period	Number Of Responses
Within one year	15
2-5 years	3
5 years and above	2
T O T A L	20

Table 15: Main activities during interim period

Activity	Number Of Responses
Domestic chores/petty trading	15
Typing lessons	3
Sewing lessons	1
Making macrame bags for sale	1
T O T A L	20

For many of the girls there was an interval between leaving school and registering for the development classes, yet the majority of them had neither obtained jobs nor enrolled in any course where they could develop their skills. Most of them spent their time helping with domestic chores and a few of them combined that with helping mothers and relatives who were engaged in petty trading. Enrolment at the development classes was thus their first positive move to acquire skills which would increase their chances of getting jobs.

Although it is clear that in Sierra Leone there are many dropout girls who would benefit from skill development programmes, there are indications that such facilities as do exist are not adequately publicized. The girls in the YWCA programme were therefore asked how they had found out about the existence of the programme.

Table 16: Source of information about development classes

Source	Number
Heard radio announcement	7
Told by friends/ relatives	3
Told by YWCA member or teacher at development classes or participant at classes	10
T O T A L	20

It seems that information flows mostly from people already involved in the programme as teachers, participants or YWCA members. This is similar to the situation at the national workshop. Publicity measures are needed to attract participants from outside this somewhat restricted group.

When the girls were asked for their initial reaction to the suggestion that they should participate in this programme, all but four of them reported that they were happy to have this opportunity. Girls who were reluctant to join this programme felt that failure in one class at school should not be taken as conclusive evidence that they lacked the ability to cope with academic work. They wanted a second chance. Two of these girls would have preferred attending the continuing education classes which were held in the afternoons in another building within the YWCA school complex. These classes were of a higher academic standard than the development classes and included mathematics, English and commercial subjects. However, it is doubtful whether these girls would have been able to cope with the higher standard. One girl who had left

school because she failed in Form 1 was advised by her father, stepmother and grandmother - all of whom lived in the same house with her and who presumably had observed her progress closely - to join the development classes. Even so she conceded reluctantly because in her opinion she was capable of continuing work at a secondary school. Another girl who was 18 years old and who had left school in Form 1 the previous year would still have preferred continuing at secondary school. However, her father had died and her uncle who was asked to pay her fees refused to do so on the grounds that she was already too old to be in Form 1 and he feared that she would become pregnant and payment of school fees would then have been a wasted investment. It would be a useful exercise to monitor the progress of these girls who at the outset were not enthusiastic about the classes.

One aim of the programme is to enable girls to acquire skills up to a standard when they can earn income from their products. Girls were therefore asked whether they had in fact utilized any of the skills learned in the classes when they went home and whether they had any income-generating activities arising from what they had learned. Since the materials used for handicrafts were provided by the girls themselves they were allowed to take the finished products home. Fourteen of the 20 girls interviewed reported that they practised these skills at home and either used the products within their family or sold them. Articles sold included crochet hats and bootees for children, embroidered articles and doughnuts. Five of them confined their practising to producing goods for home use only. Some of them mentioned that the constraint on their producing articles for sale was lack of capital for purchasing materials and ingredients. One girl reported that prior to attending these classes, she had been accompanying her aunt to sell pancakes. As a result of her tuition at the classes, she had taught her aunt how to make doughnuts. This turned out to be more profitable than selling pancakes. This was concrete proof to the aunt that attendance at the classes would be beneficial to the girl and her family.

The girls were asked to indicate the type of job which they hoped to get on completion of the course.

Table 17: Vocational aspirations

Vocational Aspiration	Number of Responses
Hotel (catering)	9
Nursing	2
Any job available	5
Job related to skills learned at development classes	1
Self employment in handicrafts	2
Transfer to continuing education classes at YWCA	3
TOTAL	20

The YWCA development classes definitely focus on the problem of dropouts who need to acquire some skills to enable them to get jobs. The organizers undoubtedly deserve credit for identifying the need and initiating a programme in response to it. None the less the following weaknesses which were observed need to be remedied if the programme is to have the expected impact.

Participants are usually expected to bring their own material for handicrafts. The respons is not as good as expected and this slows down the pace of tuition. A greater effort should be made to contact parents and guardians to impress on them the need for the girls to bring materials. Consideration also needs to be given to the type of material used. Asking girls to bring old dresses for conversion to other articles or rice bags for embroidery might be practicable but hardly attractive to young girls. Concentration on the use of new materials would arouse more enthusiasm although the financial implications are not to be underestimated. Where materials like wool, crochet or embroidery thread have to be purchased, some families might be under financial strain and in genuine cases, it might be worth considering asking YWCA members to provide funds for helping these girls.

The equipment used for cooking is inadequate. If girls are to be taught to cook well enough to gain basic skills with which they can get jobs or become self employed they need more practical experience. The equipment is limited to a two-burner charcoal stove and traditional baking pots. Cooking is therefore a slow and burdensome process and classes sometimes go on after scheduled hours to ensure that the girls get enough practice and the food is cooked.

Absenteeism affects the smooth running of the programme. It occurs when some girls who are sent home for non-payment of tuition fees stay away because they cannot pay the fees immediately. The teachers also indicated that some girls just lose interest in attending classes daily, particularly towards the end of the term. There is also a problem of unpunctuality.

Since irregular attendance and lateness are two features which can have an adverse effect on one's performance on a job, it is imperative that these girls who are already at a disadvantage in the labour market should be encouraged to develop better working habits. An investigation should be made to identify cases where non-payment of fees indicates real inability rather than just laxness. These girls can either be exempted from payment of fees, be required to pay only reduced tuition fees, be sponsored by someone other than their parents or be given positive help to use the skills taught in the classes to produce goods for sale. Reasons why girls are absent need to be ascertained by questioning the girls and paying visits to their homes. Since most of the girls interviewed reported that they spent most of the day doing domestic chores it is possible that exhaustion might be a contributory factor. Lack of motivation might be anotner explanation. These problems have implications for the curriculum and methodology.

Introducing a social element into the programme might make it more attractive for the girls. One step in this direction could be to make one evening in the term a social evening. If this is done almost at the end of

the term, it might encourage girls to continue attending right to the end of term. The building in which the classes take place is next door to the national stadium and one of the teachers commented that whenever an important football match is being played the rate of absenteeism is higher. Girls who can afford the gate fee go to the match, whilst others just hang around outside. It is not surprising that girls of their age group should find this source of entertainment attractive. Rather than compete with this attraction, a useful strategy might be to give pupils time off to attend the match but subsequently discuss it in English classes or give practical advice about suitable clothes, hair styles, behaviour, etc. for attending matches. Time lost could be made up by having slightly longer classes on preceeding or succeeding days.

The objectives of the programme should be clearly understood by all who are involved in it. When the girls register for the course, the organizers and teachers must meet the girls and their parents to ensure that there is understanding and agreement about the expected outcome of the programme, especially as regards employment. I had reservations about whether the curriculum was designed to meet the vocational aspirations expressed by the girls who were interviewed. For instance, small-scale catering for sale to school children and offices would be a more realistic expectation than hotel employment, bearing in mind the instruction given in the classes. Acting as nannies to working mothers with children under school age or producing handicrafts for sale would also be more reasonable targets. The course would then include an element which is absent at the moment i.e. a period of practical experience or apprenticeship in particular jobs, under the supervision of teachers from the development classes.

Discussion with the co-ordinator and teachers revealed that there is no follow-up service for the girls on completion of the course. This seems to be a major weakness in the programme. Job opportunities are rather limited for girls with this level of training, so they will in all probability need help with job placement. There should also be an effort to encourage some of them to become self-employed. For instance, the organizers of the programme could come to an arrangement with schools to allow these girls to sell foodstuffs to the children during their lunch break with the assurance that the food has been properly prepared under hygienic conditions. Similarly, contacts could be established with hospitals and clinics which young mothers attend to have a display of children's clothes made by the girls.

If self-employment is to be successful there will be a need for:

(a) Revision in the course content;

(b) Assistance with credit facilities for the purpose of purchasing equipment and materials;

(c) Continued guidance even after the girls have completed the course.

For example, the programme in sewing could benefit from an introduction to sewing with machines rather than being restricted to hand sewing. Girls could then be trained to sew on a commercial basis, rather

like the private sewing establishments described in this report. Similarly, emphasis should be put on catering for commercial purposes. Girls might need credit facilities for purchasing ingredients and materials and a system could be devised whereby the YWCA buys the items and the girls repay out of their profits. It seems that a follow-up service for at least one year after the girls have completed the programme will enhance the income-generating aspect of the training. Otherwise skills which have been acquired might not be adequately utilized.

VI. UNITED METHODIST CHURCH TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR WOMEN

The United Methodist Church launched an urban development programme in the 1970s and Freetown was one of the cities in which it became operative. This programme later merged with the ecumenical urban programme supported by the World Council of Churches. One of the positive outcome of the focus on urban development was the establishment of an urban centre at Kissy which is a surburb in the east end of Freetown. This area was chosen because it was observed that within a radius of about five miles there was no health clinic, youth centre, cafetaria for workers or literacy programme. Funds for building the Centre were obtained from abroad with the intention that gradually the churches in Sierra Leone would take over full responsibility.

The urban centre currently provides a health clinic, a women's training programme, a nursery school and a hostel. The women's training programme was observed for this study. Programmes for women have been established in three areas in Sierra Leone i.e. Kissy in the western area, Yonibana in the northern province and Kono in the eastern province. The decision to limit observation to the Kissy programme was made on the basis of the co-ordinator's comment that this was the most active one and would be more likely to give an insight into the objectives and operation of the scheme. The programme at Yonibana was not as active and the Kono branch was even less so.

The Kissy programme was started in 1974 and was originally aimed at attracting housewives who had not had the advantage of formal school education. Unfortunately the response was unsatisfactory and attendance was irregular. Some women stopped attending when their husbands were transferred to work in other areas of the country and the family had to move. For others, domestic chores and child-care responsibilities were partly responsible for poor attendance. Lack of motivation was probably another contributory factor. The co-ordinator explained that, in order to make it easier for mothers with young children to attend, they had been encouraged to bring their babies to the classes. Initially some mothers had attended classes with their babies but at present they tended not to make use of this facility.

Enrolment now includes housewives as well as unmarried girls. The main objectives of the programme are:

(a) To teach participants handicrafts so that they will use their skills to improve their family life;

(b) To make participants reach a level of competence which will enable them to use the skills which they have acquired, for income generating purposes.

The intake is limited to 40 participants because of constraints on staffing. Admissions are made twice a year, in January and August. The course is supposed to be of one year's duration but the co-ordinator reported that some participants who found the course very rewarding stayed on for a second or even third year to increase their competence and broaden their experience. Tuition fees are Le 6 per term. There is also a registration fee of Le 6. An additional fee of Le 4 is paid during the first term to cover maintenance of the sewing machines. The co-ordinator reported that there had been increases in the enrolment since the establishment of the programme. In 1976 for instance, only nine persons had registered, but as the scope of the programme widened, so did the enrolment.

The programme receives publicity through United Methodist Church members. Three of the participants who were interviewed said that they had heard of the programme in this way It also gets publicized by people who go to the urban centre to make use of the other facilities. Four of the participants had learned about the existence of the programme through such channels. As in other programmes considered in this study, the means of publicizing the scheme seemed rather limited.

On the day on which a visit was paid to the programme, only 12 of the 40 registered participants were present. There was clearly a problem of absenteeism and this was verified by the teachers. The co-ordinator expressed the view that the following reasons were responsible for women being absent:

(a) Unfavourable attitudes of husbands: Some husbands were reluctant to allow their wives to attend these classes because they were apprehensive about the possibility of their wives becoming too economically independent. Some of the men were also afraid that attendance at classes might be used as an excuse for meeting boyfriends;

(b) Economic activities of the women: Some participants who were traders in the local markets were absent on some days because they had gone to sell their goods;

(c) Domestic responsibilities: Classes were held between 8:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. and some women were tied down at home by domestic chores and child-care activities during these hours.

The suggestion was made that for the market women and housewives who had other responsibilities in the morning hours, it might be preferable to schedule classes for the late afternoon and early evening. The co-ordinator's reaction was that, even though that arrangement would probably be more convenient for some women, those husbands who were apprehensive about their meeting boyfriends on the pretext of attending classes would have even greater fears if classes were held later in the day.

The teachers reported that participants currently enrolled in the classes were aged between 15 and 25 years and the educational level ranged from women who had never attended school to girls who had received between one and three years of secondary school. Interviews were held with 10 of the 12 women who were present on the day of the visit.

Table 18: Educational attainment of participants

Level	Number
Never attended school	2
A few years of primary education	2
Reached final class in primary school	1
2-3 years secondary education	4
Currently attending secondary school	1
TOTAL	10

Of the four who were secondary school dropouts, two had left because of inability to cope with the academic work, one had left because of illness and one had left because her father who paid her fees had died and nobody else was willing to take up the responsibility. It was interesting to note that one participant was currently in form 3 in a recognized secondary school. She attended these handicraft classes in the morning and then went to the afternoon shift in the secondary school. This was the only instance during the whole study when a participant was seen to be combining attendance in both the formal and informal sectors of the educational system. Further questioning revealed that she was particularly interested in home economics subjects including sewing and handicrafts. She complained that although home economics was included in the curriculum of the school which she was attending the approach was rather theoretical. She wanted more practical experience as she intended continuing with home economics on completion of her secondary-school course.

The staff for the programme of the urban centre was small, consisting of a co-ordinator, two full-time teachers and the matron of the hostel who combined her duties at the hostel with giving part-time tuition to the women. The co-ordinator is responsible for women's programmes organized by the United Methodist Church and has her office in the church headquarters. She visits the Kissy urban centre once a week for administrative pruposes and to monitor the programme.

The curriculum consists of dressmaking, knitting, crochet, embroidery, macrame work, raffia work and gara i.e. tie dyeing. Literacy classes are supposed to be included in the programme, but this aspect is not operative at the moment. Sometimes materials for handicrafts are provided by the administration and, in that case, the products are retained for exhibitions and for sale. Alternatively participants supply their own materials and then the finished articles belong to them.

An impressive aspect of the programme was the establishment of direct links between the training received in the women's programme and other component sections of the urban centre i.e. the nursery school and the health clinic. For instance the women were taught to sew on electric sewing machines and when they had acquired enough competence they sewed uniforms for the children at the nursery school. Uniform material was bought by the administration and pupils then bought ready-made uniforms sewn by women in the training programme. This ensured that the children had properly made uniforms at a reasonable cost. At the same time women got valuable practice and it was evident to them that they could produce items which could be put into immediate use. Links with the health clinic were formed when the women in the training programme took the initiative to sell their products e.g. children's dresses and bonnets to mothers who attended the clinic.

It was encouraging to note that other articles produced at the centre were not merely specimen items, but were articles which could be put into use e.g. cardigans, table centres, raffia bags, macrame bags and gara dress lengths. The success of linking the programme with marketable goods was apparent when the teachers as well as the participants who were interviewed confirmed that, apart from making articles at the urban centre many women continued these activities at home and sold their products. This was facilitated by the fact that some of the women had sewing machines at home. Further support was given to the view that the course succeeded in encouraging the women to produce goods for sale when participants responded to enquiries about their job aspirations. They indicated that they would like to get jobs but in addition they intended combining employment with producing articles at home. On the basis of their experience they were confident that they could earn a reasonable income from the sale of these goods.

The greatest value of the programme seems to lie in the efforts made to establish clear links between the skills acquired and the ability of the women to increase their income and to improve their family life. However, the problem of absenteeism has to be tackled if the programme is to have a greater impact. There is an urgent need for interviewing the participants in order to discover why so many of them are absent. The programme will then need to be restructured on the basis of the responses given by the women to ensure that it does not merely reflect the views of the planners but meets the real needs of the participants. Care should also be taken to see that the programme does not conflict with other aspects of the participants lives e.g. domestic and business activities.

VII. TYPING ESTABLISHMENTS

Employers in Sierra Leone constantly express the need for efficient and reliable typists, secretaries, and stenographers. School leavers are aware of the employment opportunities and many girls therefore opt for training in this area. Often, girls who decide to take courses in typing, shorthand and allied subjects have either completed secondary school or reached the higher forms of secondary school. Many of them are therefore of a higher educational level than other girls who are in non-formal courses considered in this study. However, it must be borne in mind that often they are not the best products of the secondary schools in terms of passing the General Certificate of Education at a satisfactory level.

In deciding to do a course in secretarial subjects, they have selected a field of training which has the advantage that it can be done entirely within Sierra Leone, thus avoiding all the expense and arrangements involved in studying abroad, but at the same time they obtain qualifications which are of international standing. There is the additional advantage that they can be employed during the day and pursue their studies in the evening. On successful completion of the course, gaining suitable employment usually presents no difficulty.

Typing, shorthand and related courses are provided in commercial streams of some secondary schools, the Technical Institute in Freetown and some other establishments within the formal education sector. However, there are several private establishments which offer these courses outside the formal school or further education system. Three such establishments were observed for this study.

The first establishment is run by the Roman Catholic Mission and is situated at Kissy which is a suburb in the east end of Freetown. The area in which the school is located is near the main road which leads from Freetown to the provinces and many people coming to Freetown in search of jobs take up residence in this area. Many of the residents in this area live in overcrowded premises, unsatisfactory buildings and are in poorly paid jobs or are unemployed. It was not surprising therefore that in 1967 the residents of the area appealed to the Roman Catholic Mission for the provision of some type of educational facilities for their children who failed to gain admission to secondary school and whom they feared would also join the ranks of the unemployed or poorly paid workers. Help was also requested for dropouts from secondary schools.

In response to this request, the Archbishop employed a missionary who was a sociologist to conduct a survey on the school children in the Kissy area. This was regarded as a pre-condition for establishing an educational service. The survey highlighted the problems of secondary school leavers who even though they had reached the final form in the secondary school system, had performed unsatisfactorily in the GCE examinations. The report commented -

> The majority of students wish to pursue further studies after secondary school assuming that

they pass at least three subjects in GCE 'O' levels (West Africa). The facts are however that the average failure rate in these same schools for the past three years were:

1974 - 42 per cent passed no subject
1975 - 40 " " "
1976 - 50 " " "

These are students who succeeded in reaching form 5 to sit the GCE examinations. So while many wish to pursue further studies, it is apparent that nearly half of these may not even reach near the standard required.

As a result of the findings of the survey, the Roman Catholic Mission obtained permission from the Ministry of Education to start a vocational school at Kissy. Unfortunately, for financial, administrative and other reasons, the school has not yet been established. However, one outcome of the proposal was that in 1977 the Catholic Mission started running classes in secretarial subjects for young men and women who had left school after reaching forms 4 and 5. These were the classes which were observed for the prupose of this study.

The classes are run on a two-shift basis in the morning and evening. Morning classes are held from 8:30 to 1 p.m. and are attended mostly by girls who are unemployed, although a few of them have jobs in the afternoon. The evening classes which are held from 4:30 to 7 p.m. are usually attended by girls who are employed. There are 150 students currently enrolled in the class - about 75 in each shift. Fees charged are Le 18 per term. The majority of the students are female. Although the students are expected to have attended secondary school up to at least form 4 and preferably form 5 entrance examination is also given and it is considered to be a more reliable assessment of their ability for the course.

This programme serves as an example of the use of existing facilities to launch a new venture. The classes take place in a hall attached to the Roman Catholic Church at Kissy. There are plans for constructing a new building in which the classes will be held. An initial grant was obtained from the Roman Catholic Mission to purchase typewriters and sets of textbooks. Students have to purchase some of their textbooks.

The principal of the classes is a Roman Catholic Sister. Other staff members include Sisters, a Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO) worker and Sierra Leonean teachers. All staff members are qualified in commercial and related subjects and some are qualified commercial teachers. Some of the Sierra Leoneans teach in other schools during the day and offer part time services in these typing classes during the evening. The need was expressed for more Sierra Leonean teachers. It is hoped that when the Milton Margai Teachers College begins to produce commercial teachers the staffing situation will improve. The course for commercial teachers has recently been started at the College and the first set of students will qualify soon. This will improve the staffing in establishments within the formal and informal systems.

Subjects offered regularly in these classes are shorthand, typing, office practice, English, Commercial Arithmetic and accounts. There has also been an attempt to teach some needlework and handicrafts such as embroidery, macrame work, crochet work and knitting. The response from the girls with respect to the needlework and crafts has not been keen. A possible explanation for their attitudes is that they are essentially interested in getting qualifications which will enable them to obtain secretarial jobs. They probably consider it a waste of their time to become involved in other subjects.

This establishment was of a higher standard than the other typing institutes which were visited, as regards the provision of physical facilities and instructional material. Students were divided into groups and there was an adequate number of typewriters and sets of textbooks for each group. The premises on which the classes were held were spacious and included not only a main hall but smaller classrooms. Chairs, tables and storage capacity seemed adequate. This was the only typing establishment visited which was not held in the private residence of the proprietor. It should be noted that one of the weaknesses of typing institutes is that many are held in private residences with the accompanying cramped and unsatisfactory conditions. It was also noticeable that in contrast to other establishments, qualified staff members were always available during the scheduled tuition periods to give instruction and supervision.

The second establishment which was visited is run by a qualified commercial teacher who has a full-time job in addition to running these typing classes which take place in her house. Men are admitted only by special arrangement. The teacher expressed a fear of disiplinary problems if both sexes were admitted and had to work during her absence.

Courses are given in typing, shorthand, English and office practice. Fees charges are Le 6 per subject per month. Classes run from 8:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., in two shifts. There are a limited number of typewriters so they have to be used in rotation. Each girl is entitled to one hour's practice on the typewriter each morning. The teacher has someone to supervise the use of the typewriters, Since the girls come in at different times, any girl can continue using the typewriter beyond the stipulated period provided nobody else has arrived to use it. The teacher comes home during her lunch break to check on their work and give new assignments. The girls continue to work on her departure. When she returns from work in the afternoon, she gives further tuition and returns any corrected assignments. The first group finishes classes around 4 pm. A second group, made up mostly of girls who are employed, receives tuition between 4 and 7:30 p.m. For both groups a lot of time is spent doing assignments and practising. Supervised work and tuition are provided only when the teacher is home. However, she stressed that emphasis is put on individual tuition and this enables the girls to make good progress.

The third establishment is privately run and has the smallest enrolment. At the time of my visit only ten girls were enrolled and the teacher in charge pointed out that the establishment will be closed within the year, so new students were not being accepted. Classes were held in a room in the proprietor's house. The teacher had passed some typing and shorthand examinations but was not a trained commercial teacher. Fees charged were Le 4.50 per subject per month.

Some of the girls in each of the three typing establishments were interviewed as follows:

50 of the girls in establishment A

8 of the 12 girls in establishment B

4 of the 10 girls in establishment C[5/]

In establishment B, the teacher suggested that only girls in the morning shift should be interviewed because many of those in the evening shift were taking examinations.

Table 19: Form at which the girls left school

	A	B	C	TOTAL
Form 3	1	1	0	2
Form 4	9	1	2	12
Form 5	40	6	2	48
	50	8	4	62

Although most of the girls had reached the higher forms in the secondary school system, an indication of the fact that their educational attainment was not always satisfactory can be obtained from the level of spelling and English in some of their responses.

5/ The establishments have been labelled A, B, and C for purposes of reporting.

"Shouth:nd" (shorthand)

"Typeing" (typing)

"He is a business women seeling dresses"

"I have a typewritter"

"I was being do typing in my home"

"I had an announcement through the radio"

"I would like to be a Secretarart"

"Difficult because their is not enough job"

"Young girls nowadays don't take their works seriously so some bosses are afraid to give them job".

In view of these responses, the policy which the principal of establishment A had of administering an entrance examination to get a proper assessment of their attainment seemed appropriate.

Although most of the girls who enrolled in these classes had left school because they had reached the final class, it was considered worthwhile to find out the reasons why the others had left school.

Table 20: Reason for leaving school

Reason	A	B	C	Total
Finished school	40	6	2	48
Difficulty over fees	8	1	2	11
Illness	-	1	-	1
Pregnancy	1	-	-	1
Marriage	1	-	-	1
	50	8	4	62

Difficulty over payment of fees accounted almost exclusively for the girls leaving school before completing the course. It is therefore not surprising that one difficulty faced by the proprietors of the typing establishments was that the girls failed to pay their fees on time. The girls were asked to indicate the frequency with which they experienced difficulty over payment of fees for these classes. It was made clear to them that even if they eventually succeeded in paying the intention was to find out whether they experienced any difficulty in the process.

Table 21: Difficulty over payment of fees

Frequency	A	B	C	Total
Every/most month(s)	9	2	-	11
A few months	15	3	2	20
Never	26	2	2	30
No response	-	1	-	1
	50	8	4	62

About 50 per cent of the girls indicated that they experienced some difficulty over payment of fees. It seems that the financial problem faced during school days persisted up to this stage of their training. In establishment B, the proprietress explained that some girls who had not paid their fees would slip into class in her absence and practise on the typewriters. This could go on for some time until they obtained the fees or discontinued attendance at the classes. In the first establishment where the Principal and staff were always present, such evasive strategies could not be used. Consequently girls are sent away from class until they can pay the fees. This leads to disruption in the teaching. In fact it affected the study because several girls had to be sent away on the day scheduled for interviewing them. Consequently another visit had to be made.

The girls were asked to indicate who paid their fees and this information was considered in relation to their answers concerning difficulty over payment of fees.

Table 22: Source of fees/difficulty over payment

	Self	Relative	Husband/ Boyfriend	Total
Difficulty over fees	13	13	4	30
No difficulty over fees	5	16	10	31
	18	29	14	61

NOTE: One of the 62 students did not respond.

Where the girls were responsible for paying their own fees they tended to experience difficulty more often than when their husbands paid. It must be added that in the combined category of husbands and boyfriends three of the four cases in which difficulty was encountered, concerned boyfriends. Presumably when husbands agree to pay fees, they are more reliable than boyfriends. These girls probably do not earn enough to meet all their commitments. Attendance at these classes is a means of improving their skills and income. Until this training is successfully completed, difficulty over payment of fees should be expected.

Many girls in Sierra Leone require training in secretarial courses either to obtain jobs or to improve their performance in their jobs. Yet adequate attention is not paid to publicizing available training facilities. Invariably would-be participants learn about the existence of these courses informally through friends. Only a handful get information through publicity mechanisms initiated by the establishment.

Table 23: Source of Information about course

Source	A	B	C	Total
Told by own friends or friends of parents	37	6	3	46
Heard radio advertisement or saw notice board	7	-	1	8
Told by current participant	4	1	-	5
Told by teacher in the course	2	1	-	3
	50	8	4	62

An attempt was made to ascertain whether the girls devoted some time to practising these skills apart from the work which they did during classes. They were asked to indicate what their main activities were when they were not attending classes and also whether they had access to a typewriter at home.

Table 24: Main activities outside classroom

Activities	A	b	C	Total
Domestic chores/looking after children	15	2	2	19
Job	27	1	2	30
Petty trading/helping in family business	4	2	-	6
Homework/practising typing and shorthand	4	3	-	7
	50	8	4	62

Table 25: Access to a typewriter

	A	B	C	Total
Access	17	3	0	20
No access	33	5	4	42
	50	8	4	62

About two thirds of the girls did not have a typewriter on which they could practise at home and only four of them indicated specifically that they spent time practising at home. Unfortunately information was not obtained about the nature of their jobs. Probably some of them had typing jobs in the process of which they got some practice.

Although the girls were undergoing training for secretarial jobs, it was suspected that for some of them this was not their real vocational aspiration. They were therefore asked to indicate what they would really like to do. Not surprisingly most of the responses were for typing and secretarial jobs. Yet about 25 per cent of them indicated a preference for other types of jobs, of which being an accountant was most popular. Others mentioned being a bank official, producer in a broadcasting station, or a nurse. Bearing in mind their educational background, it is not clear how realistic these aspirations were. What is obvious is that some of them need vocational guidance.

Table 26: Vocational aspirations

Vocational aspirations	A	B	C	Total
Secretarial	30	7	4	41
Other	15	1	0	16
business	4	0	0	4
Undecided	1	0	0	1
	50	8	4	62

Obtaining jobs is becoming increasingly difficult for young school leavers particularly if they are unskilled and poorly educated. It was felt that many of these girls would be afraid that this might affect them. In fact some had already encountered this difficulty as they mentioned that they had been seeking employment without success. Even though their chances of employment would improve when they finished their training, the uncertainty might still be a cause for concern. Their opinion was sought on why it was so difficult to get jobs.

Table 27: Reason given for difficulty in obtaining jobs

Reason	A	B	C	Total
Girls not qualified or not competent	14	1	2	17
Jobs scarce	16	4	2	22
Lack of influential supporter	3	1	0	4
Need to befriend or bribe employer	6	1	-	9
Combination of first three above	2	-	-	2
No response	7	1	-	8
	50	8	4	62

It was interesting to note some of their comments under the different categories of response:-

Girls not qualified or competent

"Because most girls do not corporate (co-operate) when they get jobs".

"Because most girls are not serios to work".

"They need dresses and as a result they get pregnant wherein they go for live (leave) and all (the) time the place will be empty".

"It is difficult because some girls nowadays do not learn much, also some left at middle form".

"Because of half education".

"Young girls nowadays do not take their works seriously, so some bosses are afraid to give them job".

"Because some of us don't learn any job".

"It is because most girls stopped at forms 1, 2, and 3 in not good grades".

Jobs scarce

"Because the population is increasing and companies are closed".

"Because the girls are so many in the country and there are not many firms or organizations in which all of us will be attached to".

"Not enough industries and factories".

"Because there are very limited vacancies in the country".

"Because there are not many offices."

Lack of influential supporter

"If you don't have someone to back you who is a big person in that place that you like to work".

"It is difficult for girls to get a job because of strong backings".

"Because of connections or political reasons".

"It is difficult if you don't have someone to help you in finding the job."

"Because there is nobody behind you."

Need to befriend/bribe employer

"Because most of the top civil service people are not our relatives and some want to get connection with you before giving a job".

"Because you don't want to give out money. The bosses in the office like money."

"Because of 'put for me'. If you have'nt money you won't get a job".

"Because the people in the office would need money or would want to fall in love with you."

"Most bosses-men would like to have money or an affair with girls before giving the jobs and not every girl does that."

"Because most heads of departments employ their girlfriends."

The girls have indeed made a realistic appraisal of the prevailing economic situation and moral climate. Those who identified the lack of qualification and competence as contributory factors have pointed to one strategy for increasing one's employment chances when job opportunities are limited. Even so, the prevailing climate is depressing. In addition to providing technical training, these institutions will have to broaden their curriculum to include discussions about problems concerning employment. They should make greater efforts to establish direct links with employing agencies and use their influence to see if qualified girls can secure jobs without resorting to bribery, developing friendships with their employers or depending on influential supporters. Objectively, one can only conclude that the situation is a difficult one with economic, social and political implications which are not within the control of the girls or the typing institutions.

Most of the students were aged between 18 and the early twenties and had reached the higher forms of secondary school so they were old enough and sufficiently educated to feel frustrated and disappointed with low-paid jobs. The establishments gave tuition leading to the Royal Society of Arts Examination or Pitmans Certificate and reported that many candidates were successful. They commented that employers sometimes contacted them to recommend girls who wanted employment. The first establishment had adequate staff, textbooks and spacious premises, gave full time supervision to the girls and offered some assistance obtaining jobs. The second establishment had a competent teacher but could benefit from more supervision, typewriters and more spacious premises. The third establishment was obviously closing down.

The establishments which were considered for this study give an indication of the type of facilities which are provided in secretarial courses outside the formal education system. They provide a much-needed service and the participants are usually highly motivated to attend classes regularly and concentrate on their studies, because the training received is directly related to the possibility of gaining employment or increasing their earning

capacity. However, the contribution which they make can be enhanced if more attention is paid to the quality and adequacy of equipment and physical facilities, the qualification of teachers and the period allocated for supervised practice.

VIII. FUNCTIONAL ADULT LITERACY PROGRAMME

This programme originated from the desire of the Canadian University Service Overseas to start an integrated community programme in Sierra Leone. Questionnaires were sent to chiefs through district officers, asking them to identify the needs of the people in their community. As a result of their response, a functional literacy programme was initiated towards the end of 1977. Six months later, an evaluation study was conducted. It was confirmed that the programme was not only necessary but ought to be extended. The programme is now jointly sponsored by the Canadian University Services Overseas and the Foster Parents Plan International both of which are non-governmental organizations. The programme is rural-oriented with the general aim of improving the economic status of the people, introducing them to better farming methods and mobilizing them to work better. The emphasis is on improving the quality of life within their own environment as opposed to their having to leave their villages to seek more favourable conditions elsewhere. To accomplish this, there are two facets to the programme. One aspect is adult literacy and the other aspect is the teaching of basic gardening and farming skills, handicrafts, home management, health and sanitation.

The objectives of the programme as specified by the projects officers are as follows:

(a) To make participants functionally literate in the vernacular first and foremost and then in English, if the need arises;

(b) To combine work and study in order to improve the economic position of the people e.g. improved farming, higher yield, higher income;

(c) To provide fundamental education in such areas as public health, child care, marketing, storage, nutrition, etc.;

(d) To develop complementary literacy programmes for both men and women based on the traditional division of labour;

(e) To develop a high spirit of community involvement and participation in community development programmes.

The programme is operative in three areas i.e. the Bombali district and Port Loko district in the northern province and the Pujehun district in the southern province. Owing to the limited time available only the Bombali district was visited for this study. In each district, the programme covers 12 to 15 villages. After an evaluation of the Bombali programme in 1979, it

was decided not to expand any programme beyond 15 villages. An attempt was made to find out the extent of female participation and information given in the Bombali district indicated that, of 900 participants, approximately 50 per cent were women. It was not possible to obtain the exact ages of the women, but the co-ordinator estimated that about half of the women were in the age range of 17 to 20 years and the rest were between 20 and 50 years. They were non-schoolers who were mainly engaged in subsistence farming. Some earned extra income from weaving and craftwork. The policy was to accept any woman who expressed a desire to participate in the programme. There were fluctuations in the enrolment as people moved to other villages outside the area or got jobs elsewhere.

Table 28 gives details of the approximate number of villages participating and the teaching and administrative personnel involved in the programme as supplied by the project officers. These figures were obtained in September 1980.

Table 28: Enrolment, teaching and administrative personnel

Area	Villages	Classes	Co-ordinator	Organizer/ Supervisor	Inst./ Facility	Participants
(i) Bambali district						
Makari - Gbanti Bambali - Sebora Chiefdoms	15	30	1	3	30	900
(ii) Port Loko Dist.						
Kafu Bullom - Loko Masama Chiefdoms	12	24	1	2	24	720
(iii) Pujehun Dist.						
Kpanga - Kabonde Chiefdom	15	30	1	2	30	900
T O T A L	42	84	3	7	84	2,520

The co-ordinators, organizers/supervisors and instructors/facilitators are responsible for ensuring that effective instruction is given in the programme.

The programme co-ordinator is responsible for over-all supervision and ensuring the smooth-running of the programme. The co-ordinator in the Bombali district had a certificate in youth leadership as well as a qualification in Journalism.

There are two or three organizers/supervisors in each district. Each one is responsible for running courses in some of the 15 villages within the district. They act as liaison officers between the co-ordinator and the villages in financial, social and organizational matters. They are responsible for the immediate supervision of the instructors/facilitators.

There are 24 to 30 instructors/facilitators in each district and they do the actual teaching. In preparation for this, they receive in-service training from the co-ordinators and supervisors. In the Bombali district, approximately 80 per cent of the instructors have been locally trained through this programme and the rest are primary-school teachers. The Bombali district is more advanced in this respect than the other districts which still rely heavily on primary-school teachers. They teach in literacy classes three times a week and take part in all self-help projects identified and implemented by the villagers.

The co-ordinators, organizers and facilitators are all provided with motor cycles. The rationale is that:

(a) This is a relatively quick and inexpensive way of reaching the 15 villages;

(b) This means of transport is not too sophisticated and consequently does not create a social barrier between them and the villagers;

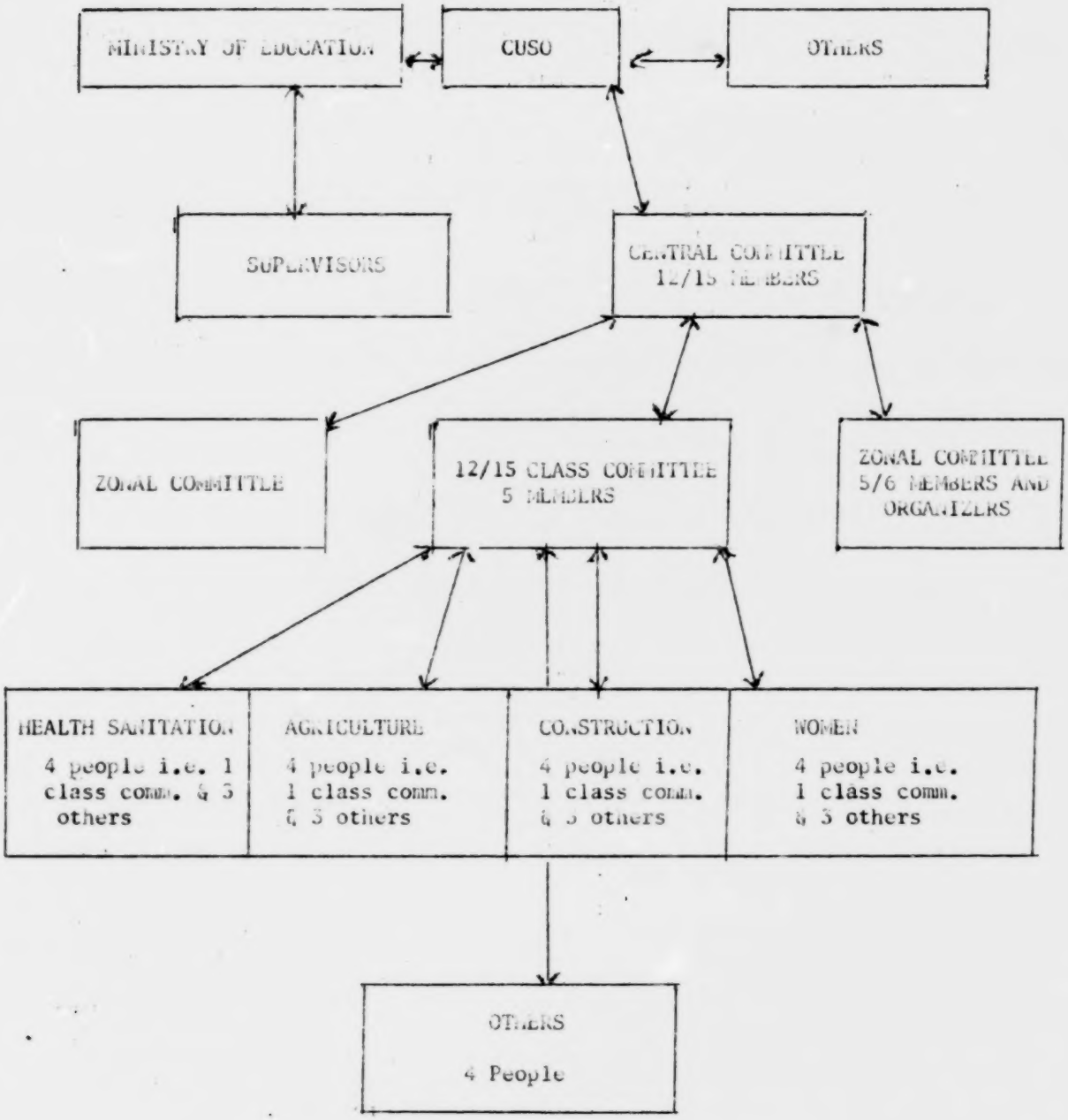
(c) The ease and speed with which these motorcycles can be used to reach villages enables the co-ordinators and supervisors to visit the villages frequently, become well-known and therefore accepted. This facilitates obtaining feedback from the villagers.

Close contact with the villages is also maintained because the co-ordinators as well as the organizers are themselves resident in one or other of the 15 villages. This is in contrast to projects where administrative and teaching personnel pay periodic visits to the projects from the towns in which they are resident.

The programme offers a good example of the extent to which participants can be involved in the organization and administration of their programme. The intention is that, through this strategy, the project will use the resources and expertise of trained personnel and at the same time benefit from the sense of commitment and involvement of the villagers. Poor response in some projects has been due to a feeling on the part of the target group that they are not part of the decision-making process and their views are inadequately reflected in the programme. Figure I presents the organizational structure of the programme.

FIGURE I

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF FUNCTIONAL LITERACY PROGRAMME



The aim of this organizational structure is to get participants increasingly involved in the programme for decision-making and implementation purposes. Thus the Central Committee, which is the highest committee, is gradually assuming greater responsibility, and members have become more conscious of their responsibility to secure the effective running of the programme and to see that the interests of the sponsoring bodies as well as the target community are protected. Care has been taken to keep these committees distinct from the existing political and social organs of the villages.

The curriculum has grown out of the needs expressed by the villagers. When the people identify a problem area or indicate a particular skill which they would like to acquire, the facilities are provided to meet their needs. The curriculum now comprises agricultural projects for growing rice, groundnuts, cassava and tobacco, crochet work, needlework, gara or tie dyeing and literacy classes. During the visit to the Bambali district, the impression gained was that many villages were more interested in those aspects of the programme which were perceived as being more likely to become income-generating in the near or immediate future than in the literacy programme.

The methodology used in the programme is a combination of the Paulo Freirean psycho-social method and the work-oriented approach. The psycho-social approach emphasises the transmission of relevant information and the teaching of skills in order to improve the standard and increase the quantity of goods produced in the community. One of the underlying principles of the programme is that participants should not be taught and instructed in the manner in which teaching is done in the formal school system. Instead they should be aided or helped to learn by discussing their problems and needs and by being introduced to new techniques which will enable them to solve their problems.

Problems are approached through discussions and through practical demonstrations and implementation of suggested techniques for minimizing or eliminating difficulties which are being experienced. In the agricultural projects for instance, villagers are taught improved farming techniques to enable them to increase their yield and income. In addition to demonstration gardens, farming is done communally. When participants have reached a decision about the crop which they want to plant, seeds, agricultural tools and other equipment are bought and instruction is provided to ensure good results. The produce is then sold and it is expected that the villagers will use part of the proceeds of the sale to buy seeds for the following year. In this way they are being taught to become economically independent of the sponsoring authorities.

The strategy of combining discussion with an introduction to the use of new techniques is best illustrated by reference to a community and family health problem i.e. clean water. Below is an example of the procedure recommended for tackling this topic. It combines the use of visual aids with discussion and the introduction to technical skills which can be used to solve the problems.

PROBLEM: WATER

1. Picture A: Well - toilet nearby, well uncovered, children playing nearby, frogs.

   Picture B: Stream - people washing themselves and clothes in the stream and using it as a toilet, water being collected from the stream.

2. Discussion questions

   (a) What do you see in the picture?

   (b) Is there a problem and why?

   (c) Do we have a similar problem in our village?

   (d) What can we do about it?

3. Action suggestions

   (a) Boil the water (to kill the germs in the water).

   (b) Build a well and maintain it properly.

   (c) Make small dams.

4. Technical information

   (a) Siting and building a well.

   (b) Contact IADP for help.

Illiteracy is perceived as part of the wider problem of the liberation of human potential. The acquisition of literacy is regarded as a mechanism for improving the standard of living of villagers without removing them from their environment. The literacy programme attempts to combine the teaching of reading and writing in the vernacular with basic education in areas such as agriculture, community and family health, finance and cultural issues. This was apparent in a list of problems suggested for use as content material for literacy classes. These topics were suggested at a planning meeting held prior to the launching of the programme.

Preliminary list of problems to be used a content for literacy course

1. Agriculture

   1.1 Credit

   1.2 Land

   1.3 Loan management

   1.4 Collective action/organizational skills

   1.5 Agricultural techniques

      (a) Ploughing
      (b) Fertilizer application
      (c) Irrigation
      (d) Weeding
      (e) Spraying
      (f) Harvesting
      (g) Grain storage

2. Community and family health

   2.1 Clean water

   2.2 Yaws: overcrowding, poor ventilation, malnutrition, poor sanitation

   2.3 Malaria

   2.4 Malnutrition

   2.5 Black flies

3. Other issues

   3.1 Money, poverty

   3.2 Youth, unemployment, urban migration

   3.3 Erosion of traditional cultural institutions and values.

3.4 Women: (a) Women's work vis-a-vis men's work.

(b) Women's participation in community life.

(c) Marriage.

(d) Women's talk

3.5 Education:

(a) Adult literacy in Temne

(b) Muslim versus Christian education

(c) Meeting place for literacy classes.

In teaching the villagers to read and write, a close link is maintained with their everyday life and with familiar objects and situations. For instance, they might take a work like "kola" and discuss the social customs associated with kola in their society. The work is divided into syllables which are then learned individually and transposed to form other words. New concepts associated with these words are then discussed.

The venue for the literacy classes is usually the village community centre which is invariably a building which has been constructed with funds from the project and labour provided by the villagers. Project funds also cover production costs of primers, the purchase of lamps, slates, black-boards, teaching aids and stationery. The funds are also used to pay the salaries of the co-ordinators, organizers and instructors and to pay for the expenses incurred in training them.

The literacy classes are held three times each week at about 8 p.m. They have to be scheduled for the evenings because this is a farming community where villagers leave their homes early in the morning to work on their farms all day. When they return home many are too exhausted to be enthusiastic about attending literacy classes. Those who are keen to attend classes need a break to have their meal and some rest. It is not surprising to find that many registered participants are either absent or late. When a visit was paid to one of the classes which was supposed to start at 8 p.m. only two participants had turned up by 8:45 p.m. and it was significant that both of them reported that they had not worked on their farms on that day. In spite of these difficulties, the co-ordinator for the Bombali district reported that a substantial number of the participants can now read and write in their native language i.e. Temne. The project officer supports this estimate that about 65 per cent of participants in all the three areas in which the programme was operating could now read and write. It must be mentioned, however, that the attainment of these literacy skills is of an elementary level.

The strength of the functional literacy programme is that it is based on problems which are identified by the villagers involved in the project. Literacy, desirable as it undoubtedly is, often does not have a priority claim for attention from people who are overwhelmed with problems of health, sanitation, poor crop yield and inadequate income. Unless these problems are minimized it is usually difficult to get people highly motivated to acquire literacy. The programme, by approaching the task from the angle of solving existing problems, increases its chances of having the literacy

component accepted. The project also makes a definite effort to narrow the gap between the organizers and the target group by arranging for the organizers to reside among participants, visit them often and encouraging the villagers to become involved in the decision-making process. The task is not easy because the villagers are principally occupied with farming for most of the day. However with the approach which has been taken it seems likely that the over-all objective of improving the quality of life of the participants will be achieved.

IX. VILLAGE HEALTH WORKERS COURSE

UNFPA in collaboration with the Government of Sierra Leone, runs a course to train village health workers. Planning for the programme started in 1976 and the programme was actually implemented in 1980. This is part of a comprehensive project to provide primary health care in all parts of Sierra Leone in keeping with the philosophy that health can be used as a point of departure for improving the quality of life of the people. The approach in this project is to provide the conventional materials and health care facilities in conjunction with a fertility advisory service. Health workers are trained volunteers who will go to their own village to educate the people about basic health and sanitation matters. The programme is perceived not as a scheme for training "village doctors" or "village midwives but as a strategy for training health workers who will concentrate on educating the villagers about disease prevention and the improvement of sanitation in their environment.

The Sierra Leonean Government is responsible for providing the infrastructure and buildings for the programme but progress has been slow in this respect. At present the programme uses the facilities at the health centre at the village of Lumley which is just outside central Freetown. New buildings are being constructed on the site.

The personnel involved in the administration, organization and training aspects of the course reflect the different aspects of health care which the programme encompasses. Members of staff and supporting personnel include:

1. The Director and Assistant Director
2. Health educators
3. University educators
4. Social welfare field workers
5. Nutritionists
6. Public health inspectors
7. School of hygiene staff
8. Dentists with public health experience

Village health workers are trained by instructors who have been specially trained for this course and have displayed an aptitude for teaching at this level and proved their competence to handle the content and methodology. A visit was paid to the project during a two-week course for health workers from different villages. This was the first of a series of courses planned to take place in peri-urban centres. There were 14 participants (nine female and five male). The women had received between two and four years of secondary education, with the exception of one who had only reached class 7 in the primary school. The course content included first aid, health education, environmental health and sanitation. The teaching method which was used was more practical than theoretical and was supported by class discussions and visual aids. The relevance of the course was made apparent to the participants by encouraging them to relate the lectures to their own everyday experiences in the villages.

The intention of the organizers is undoubtedly that on completion of the course the health workers would then give their services to the villagers on a voluntary basis. Essentially it was conceived as a training exercise which should have beneficial effects on the community but would be without income-generating dimensions for the health workers. In short, the course is not designed to lead to paid employment. Seven of the nine female participants were interviewed (two were absent). Their responses indicated differences between their views and those expressed by the organizers as regards the relationship between the training scheme and future employment. Four of the participants clearly regarded the training as a preliminary step towards obtaining other paid employment or at least as valuable experience which would be to their advantage when they sought admission to other courses which would eventually lead to paid employment. One explained that she hoped that the instruction which she received during her training as a health worker and any practical experience which she subsequently had in the village would increase her chance of being admitted for training as a regular nurse in the hospital system. Three of them confessed that they were actively engaged in looking for jobs and would give up their duties as health workers as soon as they got jobs.

It is of course quite possible that their expectations for paid employment will not be realized and they will all function effectively as village health workers. However, the significance of their responses is that although theoretically their training should not be viewed as out-of-school training for employment purposes, in practice it was certainly being viewed from that perspective by some of the participants. This emphasizes the need for careful scrutiny of participants in non-formal courses to ensure that the objectives of the programme are not only clearly understood but accepted. Otherwise, staff, time and effort will not have adequate returns as measured by the impact of the programme on the villages.

The organizers expressed a preference for participants aged about 40 years and above. The assumption was presumably that the older women would be more likely to settle down and become committed to health work within the restricted confines of village life and be willing to give their services voluntarily. It was probably also hoped that the older workers would command respect among the villagers and consequently people might be more receptive to their advice than to any information supplied by younger women. During the interviews it was revealed that three of the women were

within the preferred age group, being aged between 59 and 64 years. Four were much younger, three being aged 19-20 years and the fourth being 25 years old. Interestingly, it was the three older women who indicated their intention to become health workers on completion of the course and to dedicate their time to home visits to give advice about health and sanitation. In contrast the four younger women all confessed that they would give preference to other paid employment if they could obtain it. In as much as one can come to any conclusion from such a limited sample, the indications are that the organizers seem to be justified in preferring women over 40 years because they are less likely to regard the task of being a health worker as an interim activity.

Enquiries were made about the method of recruiting trainees. The organizers did this through village elders and existing health workers who were asked to identify people who had already manifested an interest in health work and were therefore likely to remain committed to it. Five of the participants had indeed given evidence of interest in the work by helping out at the village clinics. However, one participant reported that she had simply been asked to do the course when she took her grandchild to the local clinic. Another was looking for a job and this was regarded as an opportunity for her to obtain a job. On the whole however, selection seems to have been along the lines indicated by the organizers.

When the participants were asked about their reaction to the course content they all agreed that it was interesting and not difficult to understand. Yet five of them expressed some disappointment that the course was not geared to income-generating or employment opportunities as they had hoped. They had expected to receive training which would qualify them as traditional birth attendants and one wanted not only to become a traditional birth attendant but to dispense medicines and give injections. As stated above this was not consistent with the objectives of the programme.

The traditional birth attendants receive remuneration from their patients. Their role has been outlined by Dr. Belmont Williams, the Chief Medical Officer:

> "She looks after the mother during pregnancy and labour, conducts the delivery and looks after both mother and baby after delivery. She is an authority on the customs and beliefs associated with bearing and child rearing, including nutrition of this highly vulnerable group" .... The traditional birth attendant has such a firm hold on young wives and mothers that only patients that are seriously ill are taken to hospital".

Since traditional birth attendants attend about 70 per cent of all deliveries in the country, it was decided that they should be given basic training in maternity and child care skills as part of the campaign to reduce maternal and child mortality and morbidity rates in Sierra Leone. With help from UNICEF and WHO a programme was launched in 1976 for training traditional birth attendants. It was admission to this programme to which some of the trainee village health workers aspired. They were presumably motivated because of the role and status of the traditional birth attendants as well as the remuneration which they received from their patients. Some of the trainee village health workers

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3/ Williams, B., The traditional birth attendant; Training and utilization, Sierra Leone Government, Ministry of Health, 1979.

confessed that they had been assistants to traditional birth attendants and were therefore particularly anxious to upgrade their skills and gain recognition through this course.

The training scheme for village health workers was certainly designed to fulfil a need within the villages. The course content seemed appropriate and within the competence of the participants judging from their reactions. However, the programme offers an illustration of the way in which participants can attempt to use a programme to satisfy their own ambitions rather than to fulfil the main objectives of the scheme.

X. DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THREE PROGRAMMES

The intention in this chapter is not to give a comprehensive description of the three projects in question but to highlight particular features which are regarded as useful and relevant in the provision of non-formal education. The Opportunities Industrialization Centre is mentioned because of the direct links which it tries to establish between the training received and the obtaining of jobs. The Community Education Centre at Pujehun serves as an example of the use of such establishments to offer facilities which are complementary to those offered within the formal sector and to link the training with the lives of a rural community. The Vocational School at Bo is mentioned in order to illustrate how one project can cater for women and girls with various levels of educational attainment, ranging from non-schoolers to fifth formers.

A. The opportunities industrialization centre

The Opportunities Industrialization Centre has two programmes in Sierra Leone. One, which is in Bo in the Southern province, concentrates on vocational technical training and the other, which is in Freetown in the western area, focuses on management, public administration and business development. For the purposes of this study, the Bo centre which was opened in 1978 was visited.

The centre is presented here as an example of a programme which puts into practice the view which is often expressed that training programmes should be linked to employment opportunities, and should go beyond the instruction stage into the task of job placement on completion of the course.

The over-all aim of the programme is to help members of the community to improve the quality of their lives. The project is based on the principle that if individuals can be given free skill training which will enable them to earn adequate incomes, they will then be in a better position to cope with their social, economic, and personal problems. The intention is to make people economically independent through the use of skills acquired in the

programme, as distinct from continuing to rely on the strategy of giving financial and other assistance to unemployed people. The programme is run on the following principles:

(a) Provision of training must be free to the individuals;

(b) Job placement is an essential component of the programme;

(c) Formal qualifications are not as important in this programme as obtaining jobs.

The stated objectives of the programme are as follows:

(a) To train the unemployed;

(b) To upgrade the underemployed;

(c) To provide relevant training and basic support services for trainees;

(d) To place trainees in meaningful jobs on completion of their training;

(e) To provide the employer with a skilled, dependable and well-motivated worker.

Funds for the programme have been provided for a five-year period by the USAID. There is provision for technical assistance on a counterpart basis. Local personnel are being trained so that eventually they will take over the running of the programme. Help is obtained from the Sierra Leonean Government, businesses and industries. The United Methodist Church gave assistance by making the Mission compound available for the location of the Centre. The Centre itself has fund raising activities including the sale of goods produced in the training process.

When the Centre at Bo was visited there were 177 students of whom 67 were female. The age range of participants was 16 years to just over 30 years but over half of the students were in the age group 20-25 years. The courses, which are usually of just over a year's duration, included electrical skills, auto mechanics, typing and office skills. It was reported that most of the women were registered for typing and office skills. This is confirmation of the tendency of women to confine themselves to traditionally feminine courses which lead to a narrow range of jobs. However, it was encouraging to note that some of the women had chosen other courses and it was hoped that this would provide evidence that women could do other types of subjects apart from secretarial courses.

The admission procedure which is used provides support for the job-orientation approach which is a fundamental principle of the programme. Applicants are normally required to have attained to third form level in a recognized secondary school. This condition can be relaxed in the case where a candidate has only reached second form level but displays a keen desire for training and has an aptitude for it. Applications are first

screened in the light of projections about job opportunities in the country and availability of space at the Centre. The applicants are then interviewed by counsellors to find out their background and suitability for the training course. If the counsellor is satisfied with the applicant's responses, he/she is asked to undergo a diagnostic test in English and mathematics and the training programme which he/she undergoes is based on the result of the interview and diagnostic test.

The direct link between the courses and preparation for jobs, which is evident in the programme, is appreciated by companies and industries, which then make requests to the Centre for particular staff vacancies. Unlike some other out-of-school training programmes, the Centre provides follow-up services to trainees when they have obtained jobs. The aim is to pay about three visits to the new worker. The purpose of the visit is to find out how the ex-trainee is coping with the job and get his/her opinion about the relevance of the training to the job which he/she is actually doing. The employer or supervisor is also interviewed in order to get a feedback on the worker's performance and also to ascertain the employer's opinion about any changes or improvements which could be made in the Centre's programme to make it more relevant to the needs of employers.

B. Pujehun community education centre

A community education centre was started by the Roman Catholic Mission in Pujehun in the southern province. The establishment of community education centres was one of the recommendations of the Sierra Leone Education Review. The functions of these centres as stated in the Review include the following:

(a) Bringing schooling and traditional life into a co-operative, mutually beneficial relationship;

(b) Making maximum use of resources in the local community enabling skilled experienced local people to contribute to teaching and learning;

(c) Stimulating traditional societies to engage in community development efforts.

As regards the location of community education centres, the Review stated:

> "It is expected that many CEC's will be in rural areas or wherever the traditional occupations are farming, fishing or craftwork. The urban located centres would probably be more related to small industries such as furniture making, tailoring, maintenance and repair work, etc.".

The Pujehun Centre is an example of a rural centre.

The objectives of the Pujehun Centre are in keeping with the intentions of the Review in the sense that members of this rural community are encouraged to learn new skills and techniques and become involved in

activities which will improve the quality of life of the whole community and increase the incomes of individuals within it. The project has therefore included crafts, needlework, adult literacy, animal husbandry, swamp rice cultivation, vegetable gardening and palm oil plantation. Some of the objectives of the programme are given as follows:

(a) To provide skills in domestic science, crafts and agriculture for young people to make them economically independent;

(b) To upgrade the quality of crafts produced in the district;

(c) To experiment and offer demonstrations in agriculture;

(d) To provide short courses in agriculture for local farmers using methods within the reach of limited capital;

(e) To train young people in commercial techniques to provide them with office skills;

(f) To upgrade the efficiency of office workers and business administrators;

(g) To educate as far as possible illiterate members of the community through reading, writing and discussions;

(h) To provide recreational facilities to the community for games, cultural activities and social gatherings.

The Centre has several activities one of which is the Self-Reliance Training Programme for girls. Subjects offered range from basic school subjects to home management, agriculture, typing and handicrafts. The following subjects are in the curriculum: religious knowledge; English language; general knowledge; mathematics; mother and child care; cooking and nutrition; catering and costing; home management; laundry; crafts; weaving; tie dyeing; typing and business management; health science; agricultural science; and horticulture and animal husbandry. It was reported that there are currently about 21 girls and women enrolled in the general courses and about 22 girls specializing in typing and business management.

The principal of the Centre is a Roman Catholic nun. She is assisted by another nun who acts as manager and has special responsibility for the crafts workshops. Staff development has taken into account the need to use local personnel for teaching. Between 1973 and 1980 members of staff have received further training in social leadership, domestic science, dress designing, educational sociology and textile art and design. All these staff members were trained out of Sierra Leone and now have formal qualifications. The staff also includes a gara (tie dyeing) instructress and weaving instructor who have no formal qualifications but are experienced and competent in those areas. There is thus an attempt to incorporate local personnel into the staff either by upgrading their formal qualifications or by relying on their experience.

The principal mentioned that some problems faced are due to the fact that the project is located in an area which is not easily accessible. Consequently it is not always easy to obtain staff or transport produce. Electricity and water supplies are unreliable.

St. Mary's commercial and vocational school

St. Mary's Commercial and Vocational School is located in Bo in the southern province. It was established by the Roman Catholic Mission in 1954 and caters exclusively for women and girls. One of the strengths of the programme is that it offers courses for participants with a range of educational attainment levels, i.e.:

(a) Non-schoolers;

(b) Girls who have had a few years of primary education;

(c) Girls who reached class 7, the last class in primary school, but were unsuccessful in the Selective Entrance Examination for admission to secondary school;

(d) Girls who left secondary school in forms 3 and 4;

(e) Girls who left secondary school in form 5.

The success of the programme lies partly in the fact that allowance is made for the differences in educational background in the design of the courses. The content and duration of each course vary according to the abilities and requirements of each set of participants. The methodological approach is group work so that, in the classes participants work at their own level. Individual attention is also central to the teaching strategy. Courses given are as follows:

1. Target group - Young and middle aged married women with little or no formal education.

   Course content - Dressmaking, child welfare, nutrition and home economics.

   Duration - 6 months to 1 year.

2. Target group - Girls who have never attended school or who have only reached the lower forms of primary school.

   Course content - Literacy, home economics, dressmaking.

   Duration - 2 years.

3. Target group - Girls who have completed class 7 but have not been successful in the Selective Entrance Examination.

- Girls who have left school in forms 1 and 2

Course content - English, aritnmetic, health science, general knowledge, home economics, dressmaking and pattern drafting, child welfare, handwork and embroidery.

Duration - 2 years

4. Target group - Girls wh have had 3 to 4 years of secondary education.

Course content - English, arithmetic, shorthand, book-keeping, business methods.

Duration - 2 years.

5. Target group - Girls who have reached or completed form 5.

Course content - Shorthand and typing.

Duration - 1 year.

This vocational school provides facilities for women with a variety of needs such as a desire to take better care of their acquire literacy, improve in subjects which were started within the formal school system, and acquire skills which will enable them to get jobs. Undoubtedly, it offers a valuable service for women who have either had no access to formal education or have had some experience within the system but have not reached a level which satisfies their needs.

XI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this study an attempt has been made to give an insight into a range of training facilities available for women and girls outside the formal educational system e.g. the learning of technical skills, dress making, handicrafts, embroidery, secretarial skills, agriculture, literacy, health and sanitation. The participants involved have included three types of girls i.e. women who have never attended school; girls who have attended primary or secondary school but have dropped out prior to the completion of the cycle; girls who have reached the final class in secondary school but have not attained a sufficiently high academic standard to gain admission to institutions of higher education or to obtain employment with the level of remuneration which they expect.

The programmes observed represent an effort to supplement the inadequate facilities provided within the formal educational sector. In Sierra Leone, as in other developing countries, the formal school system does not cater for all the children of school age. Girls are at a particular disadvantage as regards access to and retention within the formal school system. In addition, the provision of technical education at technical institutes and trade centres is limited. Reference has been made to the fact that such facilities as existed are not fully utilized by women. The programmes considered in this study therefore provide an illustration of the role of out-of-school programmes where the formal educational sector cannot cope with the demands put on it from two directions. In the first place there are requests for access to educational and training facilities from adults who did not have the opportunity to attend school but who now realize the value of acquiring skills which will enable them to increase their income. Secondly, individuals who went through the formal school system without achieving the academic standards or mastering the skills which they need in order to obtain well-paid jobs in a restricted labour market now seek a second chance through out-of-school programmes.

1. Objectives of the programmes

The objectives of the programmes studied, as stated by the organizers and proprietors can be briefly summarised as follows:

(a) Acquisition of skills which will enable participants to obtain employment;

(b) Improvement of techniques in order to increase output;

(c) Acquisition of knowledge and skills which will lead to an improvement in the quality of lives of their families.

Responses given by participants when visits were paid to these programmes, indicate that, from their point of view, the main incentive for enrolling in these courses is the possibility of increasing their income either by getting paid employment or through self-employment. This emphasis remains

even when the organizers put more or at least equal stress on other aspects. For instance in the Functional Literacy Programme, as far as the organizers are concerned, the attainment of literacy in the local language is a major objective of the programme. The villagers however appear to be more interested in learning better farming methods in order to increase their yield. In the Young Women's Christian Association development classes an attempt is made to broaden the horizon of girls who have left school prematurely, by continuing their basic education in English and mathematics and by introducing them to handicraft and cookery skills. The organizers visualize the course not merely as offering an opportunity for the girls to increase their chances of employment, but also as a means whereby they can gain more knowledge, self-confidence and maturity. The girls tend to see the training received simply as direct preparation for employment and for specific jobs at that.

At one of the typing establishments, courses in handicrafts had been offered in addition to the typing, shorthand, office practice and other secretarial courses. The organizers noticed a lack of interest in the handicrafts course. This was presumably due to the fact that the girls had registered for the course for the sole purpose of obtaining certificates in secretarial courses and getting employment as a result. The attempt by the organizers to broaden the curriculum was therefore not greeted with much enthusiasm.

Pointing out the differences which can exist in some cases between the objectives of a course as perceived by the organizers and as seen by the participants does not imply that the objectives of either party are wrong. On the contrary, during visits paid to the programmes the impression gained was that their objectives were worthwhile and relevant to the needs and problems of the target group. The only danger is where emphasis put on objectives by organizers and participants differ and problems arise as a result.

It is desirable that there should be agreement about the objectives of the course. In some cases this might necessitate modifications in the original intentions of the organizers if they sincerely intend to satisfy the needs of the target group. This will help to guard against feelings of dissatisfaction on the part of participants whose expectations differ from those of the organizers. It will also help prevent feelings of frustration by organizers over a lack of interest shown by participants in aspects of the course to which they attach less importance than the organizers.

RECOMMENDATION I

Right from the outset of the course, and preferably prior to formal registration, the objectives of the course should be clearly explained to and accepted by the participants.

2. Criteria for admission to courses

In recruiting participants for these programmes it seems that efforts were made by the organizers to ensure that the criteria for admission were directly related to the desired end-product. Two approaches were noticed in the programmes. For those programmes which aimed at the obtaining of certificates through examinations which were external to the training establishment, there was an insistence on the attainment of specified minimum levels of secondary school education for admission to the courses. This was so in the case of the apprentices at the national workshop, the girls at the typing establishment and the trainees at the opportunities industrialization centre. In fact some of these establishments went further to give attainment and aptitude tests to confirm that the applicants were really suitable for courses. In contrast, those programmes which were not linked to any external examinations and whose objectives were competence in performing certain skills so that participants could have a better standard of living or gain employment or increase their output did not specify minimum levels of attainment. This was the case for the girls at sewing establishments, the women at the United Methodist Church Women's programme and the functional literacy project.

On the whole the approach taken by the organizers needs to be commended. It is an attempt to ensure that individuals who would benefit from a particular course are not left out simply because of the imposition of admission requirements which are traditionally applied in formal education courses. At the same time, where applicable, selection criteria are imposed to ensure that only candidates who are likely to be able to cope with a particular course are admitted to it.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Organizers of out-of-school programmes should continue relating their admission requirements to the expected outcome of the programme.

3. Publicizing the programme

From the response given by some participants, it appears that information about the existence of programmes is often obtained from people who are already involved in the course in one capacity or another e.g. as organizers, instructors or trainees. This is encouraging in the sense that it is indicative of a feeling of confidence in the programme by people who have actually had some experience in the course. However, this is a somewhat restricted method of advertizing these programmes which one would expect to be of interest to a wider group of people. This is especially so as they are all geared to satisfying the needs of individuals in the society.

Consideration must also be given to the possibility that irregular attendance, which is a problem in some of the programmes, might be associated with the fact that some women decide to enrol for courses, mainly because friends or relatives are already involved, and not because they are highly motivated. It is quite likely that there are potential participants outside

the narrow circle who would be more highly motivated and who would be more regular attenders.

RECOMMENDATION 3

Where training facilities can cope with an increase in enrolment, efforts should be made to broaden the intake by attracting individuals who have no contact with people already involved in the programme. This could be done through radio programmes, articles and announcements in local newspapers, discussions with teachers, youths, youth leaders and parents.

4. Physical Facilities

One feature which is common to almost all the programmes is the use of physical facilities which already existed for other purposes. The only exception to this is the functional literacy programme where buildings were put up with labour provided by the villagers and funds made available by the sponsoring bodies. In a country where financial resources are very limited, it is a commendable strategy to make savings by eliminating or reducing the need for constructing buildings and obtaining furniture and equipment specifically for these projects. This is particularly true where the facilities being used would otherwise have been unused during that period. More efficient use is thus being made of the facilities.

At the same time, one must be aware of the danger of putting such a premium on cutting down costs, in that the efficiency of the programme may be reduced because of the unsuitability of the physical facilities. In some instances all that would be required to prevent this would be additions or modifications to the existing facilities. Owners of private training establishments are particularly liable to attempt to increase their profits by using private accommodation which is not ideal for the classes. This was noticed in some of the typing establishments which were visited.

RECOMMENDATION 4

Encouragement should be given to the use of existing physical facilities for out-of-school programmes, but only where it will not have an adverse effect on the quality of training received.

5. Availability of instructional materials

The programmes which were observed had a practical, rather than theoretical bias. Their success was therefore partly dependent on the availability of equipment and materials with which the participants could practice the skills which were being taught. In a programme like the national workshop apprenticeship scheme there seemed to be comparatively little difficulty over this matter, especially since equipment formerly used by the Sierra Leone Railway was at the disposal of the students. In other programmes like the sewing establishments and typing institutes, the scarcity of sewing machines and typewriters necessitated the implementation of a rota system for practising. Other programmes like the YWCA development classes suffered from a lack of materials because the sponsoring body did not provide them and the girls were either lax or could not afford to provide their own materials. In a programme like the United Methodist Church Women's programme little difficulty was reported over the provision of materials. It was indicated that these women got money for purchasing materials either from their husbands or from their own business activities. The girls at the YWCA classes were younger on the whole and were largely dependent on parents and guardians who were often not prompt in responding to their requests.

It should not be expected that the onus of providing all materials should rest on the organizers, particularly so where tuition fees are low and do not even cover the cost of staff salaries, equipment and other running costs. At the same time one must come to terms with the fact that the provision of materials presents a real problem for some participants who come from poor home backgrounds. It must be borne in mind that some of them had to leave school for financial reasons. Careful consideration should be given to this issue with a view to devising a scheme suitable for each programme to ensure that participants get the practical experience which is a vital component of their training. The materials can be bought by the sponsoring body as part of their financial contribution to the course or they can buy the materials and then sell the goods produced in order to recover their capital.

RECOMMENDATION 5

Equipment and materials should be made readily available to participants to ensure that they get adequate practice during their training. Where necessary the organizers should initiate schemes which will allow for the supply of materials by the sponsoring body, on the understanding that the cost will be received.

6. Finance

The programmes which were observed receive financial support from a number of sources both within Sierra Leone and outside, and from bodies such

as the Sierra Leonean Government, religious missions, quasi-governmental organizations, voluntary organizations and private investors.

In some of the programmes, funds are also obtained from the payment of registration and tuition fees. Difficulties are encountered when some participants fail to pay fees at the scheduled time and have to be refused admission to classes until they pay their fees. This leads to disruption of classes. Some investigation should be made into cases where real financial hardship is being experienced. There might be a need for exemption from all or part of the fees or some strategy can be devised for granting loans which can be recovered over a long period or repaid from the sale of goods produced.

Some of the programmes had already established the practice of obtaining income from the sale of goods. For example, at the national workshop there is a salesroom which stocks goods produced by qualified craftsmen and technicians working in the establishment. Similarly, the United Methodist Church women's programme sells some of the articles produced and accepts orders from customers wanting particular articles.

The justification for demanding fees needs to be examined in cases like the sewing establishments where the trainees produce articles which are sold, with the proceeds going to the proprietress. It appears that there is some resistance from the trainees at the thought of their labour being given free. At the same time the owners of the establishments feel justified in keeping the proceeds of sales on the grounds that the girls are receiving tuition free of charge. Probably greater use should be made of the arrangement, observed in one of the establishments, where girls who had attained a certain level of competence were allowed to accept a few private jobs.

RECOMMENDATION 6

(a) The place of tuition fees in non-formal programmes should be examined with particular reference to participants who experience difficulty over payment;

(b) The question of remuneration during the training period should be considered especially when trainees produce goods which are then sold by the owners of the establishments;

(c) Full advantage should be taken of the possibilities of earning income through the sale of goods produced by trainees.

7. Course Content and Methodology

The content of the courses which were observed were related to the objectives of the organizers. With the exception of the functional literacy programme, all decisions about courses were made by the organizers. Where these courses were designed towards the attainment of a certificate through an external examination, it is reasonable to assume that the expert knowledge of the organizers and instructors is required for making decisions about course content and methodology. This would be the case for programmes such as the Opportunities Industrialization Centre, the national workshop apprenticeship scheme and the typing establishments. In courses where some emphasis is on teaching skills which will make the women self-employed and also improve the quality of their family life, consideration should be given to the possibility of having greater participation by the target group in decisions about areas of concentration, times and days on which classes are held and the mode of instruction. A programme like the United Methodist women's programme would fall into this group. The village community health workers training scheme can serve as an example of another category. Here, a certain amount of professional expertise is required to determine basic health and sanitation information and techniques which should be mastered by the trainees. At the same time, since all the trainees are normally resident in the villages in which they will work, they are presumably conversant with the problems facing their particular villages, and should be given an opportunity to identify specific areas in which they would like to concentrate. Even if the areas which they suggest are essentially the same as the ones on which organizers would have focused in any case, their inclusion in the decision-making process will tend to increase their sense of involvement in the programme. One would therefore expect them to carry out their duties with greater enthusiasm as a result.

In all the programmes, the methodology employed included the transmission of information through lectures, the holding of discussions and practical work. In some, a definite effort was made to utilize visual aids and encourage class participation in discussions. This was noticed in the course for village health workers.

RECOMMENDATION 7

As long as the standard of the programme is not lowered, it is desirable to involve participants in decision making about course content and methodology in order to increase their sense of involvement and consequently their motivation to attend classes regularly and practise the skills which they have learned on completion of the course.

8. Staffing

Instructors in charge of programmes were of different categories:

(a) Some had been especially selected and had received specific training appropriate for that particular course e.g. the instructors for

the village health workers and the functional literacy programme and some of the typing establishments;

(b) Some had received their training elsewhere but could use it for the out-of-school programme e.g. instructors at the YWCA development classes, many of whom were teachers within the formal school system;

(c) Some had the minimum level of qualifications necessary for teaching the course e.g. in one of the typing establishments the instructor had the same qualification for which she was now giving instruction, i.e. the first level of typing and shorthand examinations;

(d) Some lacked adequate qualifications and had to be sent abroad for upgrading. Meanwhile participants did not receive the instruction which they were supposed to receive;

(e) Some relied on experience rather than formal qualifications, e.g. some of the instructors at the community education centre at Pujenun and the United Methodist Church women's programme.

The ideal situation seemed to be what operated in category (a). However, staff in category (c) could be equally suitable provided the role which they played was directly related to their experience and competence. It is expected that they would not be as capable in the area of theoretical instruction as with giving a practical demonstration of their skills. Staff in category (b) might need in-service training to ensure that they are not constrained by the habits, approaches, expectations and methodology which they have learned for use within the formal school system. Staff in category (c) could clearly benefit from further training - a need which had already been acknowledged by staff in category (d).

Attention should focus not only on the teaching qualifications of co-ordinators and instructors, but also on their organizational skills. Weaknesses were sensed in the latter area in some of the programmes. During the period of data collection, on more than one occasion, I arrived by appointment only to find that the women and girls who were present were much below the expected number. In one case this was due to the fact that the instructor had forgotten to mention that many of them would be taking an external examination on that day. In another instance the instructor did not remember that they would be taking a test that evening. On one occasion many of the girls had been sent home for non-payment of fees. On another visit, I arrived at the time stipulated by the instructor on the previous day, only to be informed by her that some of the girls had arrived earlier, received their instruction and gone home. She admitted that hours of instruction were flexible. Yet she had omitted to tell me that when the appointment was made. Occurences such as these give the impression that instructors and co-ordinators need to be more organized.

RECOMMENDATION 8

Instructors should be carefully selected and should obtain appropriate qualifications or have relevant experience for the courses which they teach. They should also receive training and practice in organizational skills.

9. Output

The output of the programmes can be measured in terms of individuals who acquire skills which are income-generating, an increase in the goods which are produced and an improvement in the quality of the lives of the participants and their families. It is difficult to make definite comments about output because a real assessment can be made only if there is a follow-up of trainees on completion of their course. However, as regards certificates which will enable trainees to get jobs, programmes in this category are reported to have been reasonably successful. For instance many of the participants in typing establishments are reported to have obtained certificates in secretarial courses. Some evidence of the relevance of their training for the labour market is obtained from the observation that some employers make requests to instructors for girls who have gone through the course successfully. The programmes also have had some success in stimulating income-generating activities as deduced from the response of some participants who said that they made articles at home and succeeded in selling them. However, it would be worthwhile to encourage more of the participants to engage in these activities even before they complete the course.

RECOMMENDATION 9

More encouragement and assistance should be given to participants to earn incomes by practising the skills which they have learned. Job placement should also be an integral aspect of the course.

10. Follow-up services

One weakness in these programmes is the absence of follow-up services for participants who have completed the course. The Opportunities Industrialization Centre is an exception in this matter. The necessity has not arisen in other programmes where the first set of trainees has not yet completed the course e.g. the group of community health workers who were in the middle of their course, and the national workshop apprentices. However, in the case of other programmes which had been running for longer periods and where some trainees had completed their course, there was no organized system of visiting employers to find out about the performance of the new employees. The absence of this type of feedback limits the possibility of improving the programmes to make them more relevant to the needs of employers.

In cases where the women and girls are taught skills which will enable them to become self-employed, it seems that they not only need assistance in the initial establishment of their businesses, but also constant monitoring. Assistance which is needed will include financial loans to purchase equipment and buy materials and facilitating contacts for outlets for their goods. Periodic visits to the women and girls will be necessary to see that they are implementing the principles which they were taught. They might also need guidance in setting up inexpensive but functional workshops, salesrooms and booths and kiosks for selling food and handwork, etc.

As one of the participants confessed, becoming self-employed is a daunting prospect. For many women and girls it is safer to seek jobs. Yet for some of them self-employment will be the only realistic expectation in the prevailing economic climate. Follow up services are obviously essential if they are to gain the confidence to establish their own businesses and if they are to attain the standards of workmanship which will ensure that their goods are bought.

RECOMMENDATION 10

Follow-up services should be provided for each course with a view to making improvements in the programme and ensuring that participants can earn their living by practising the skills which they have learned.

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